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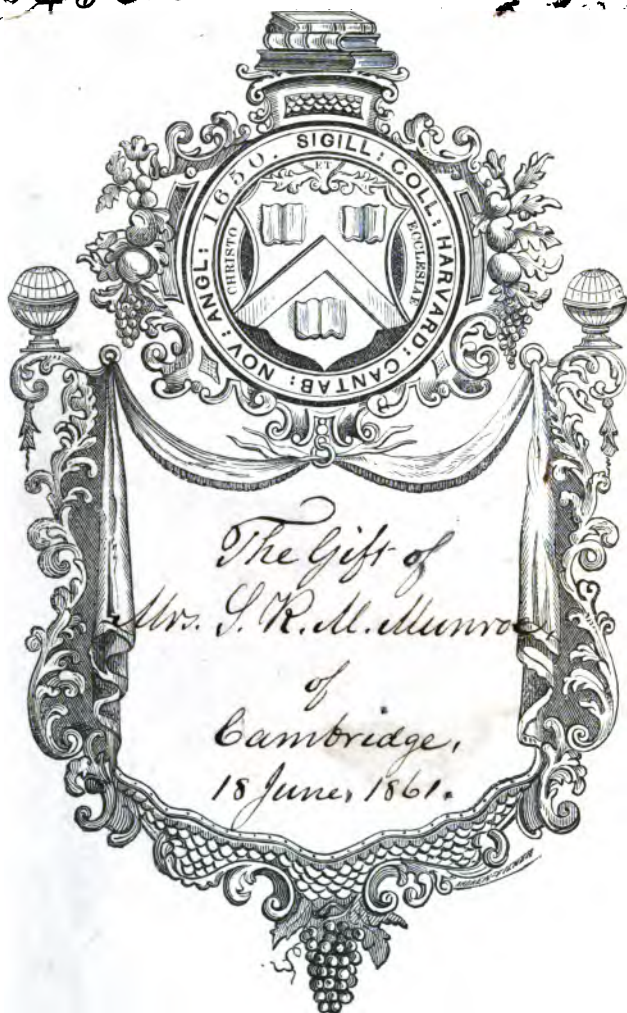
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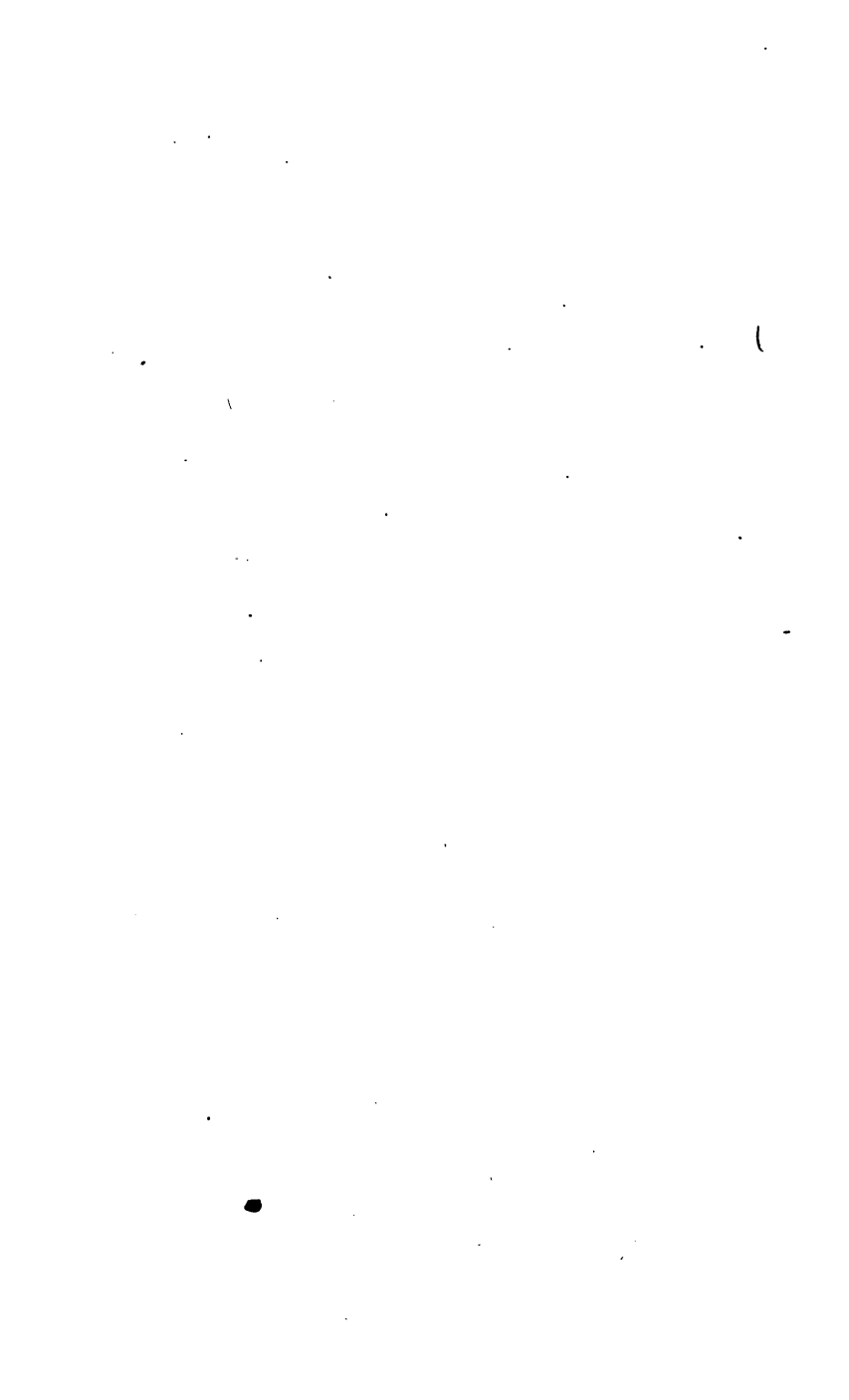
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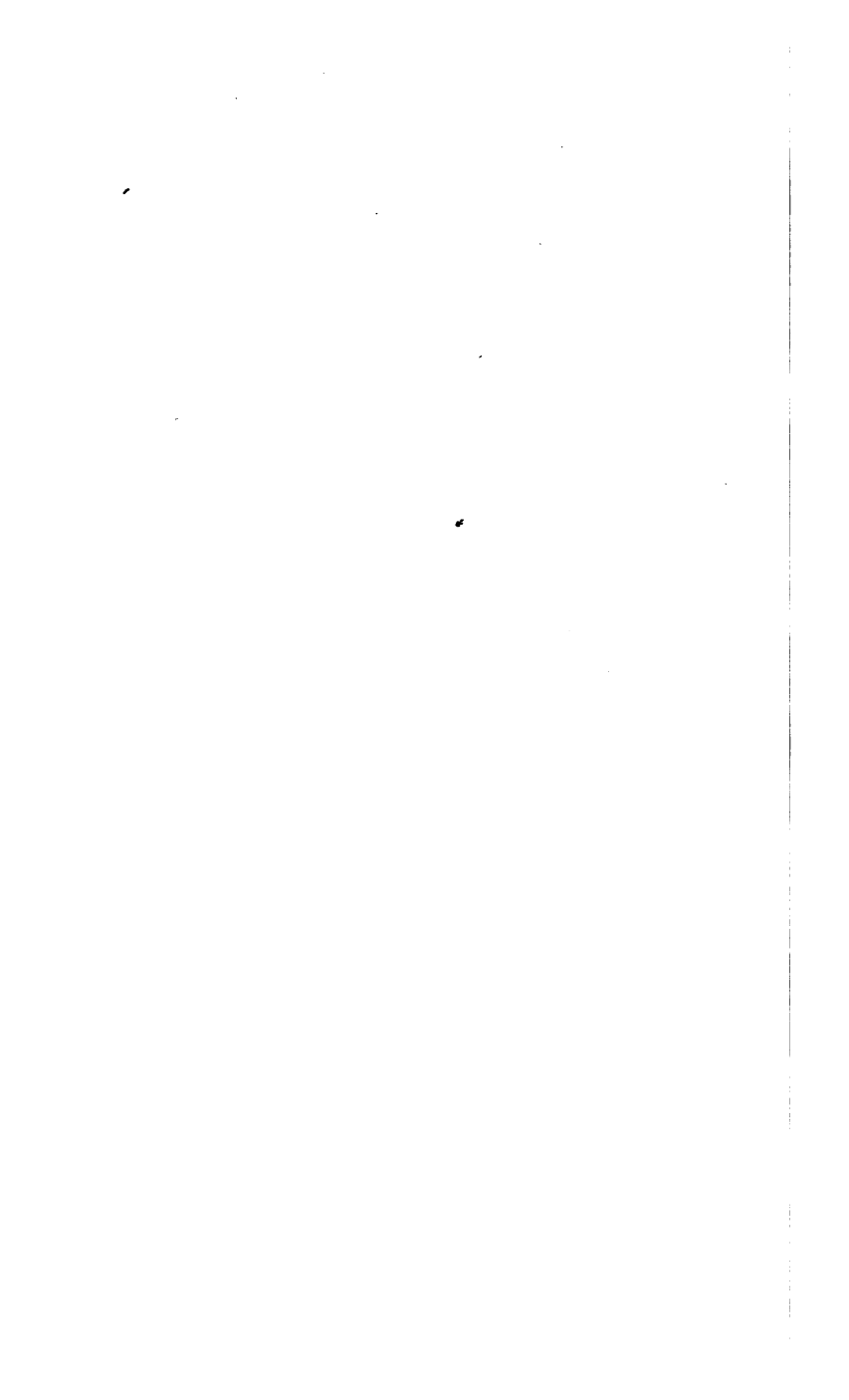
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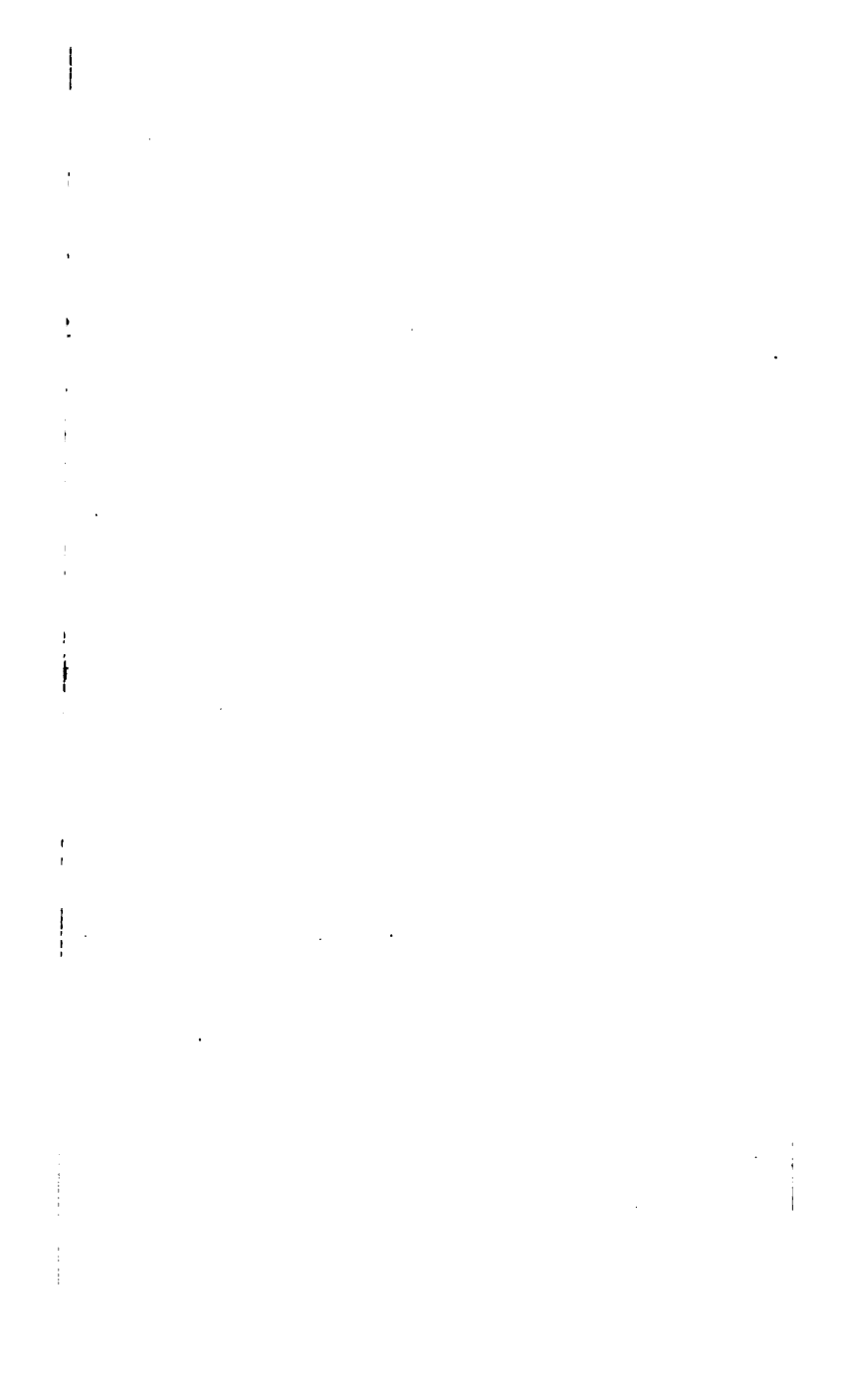
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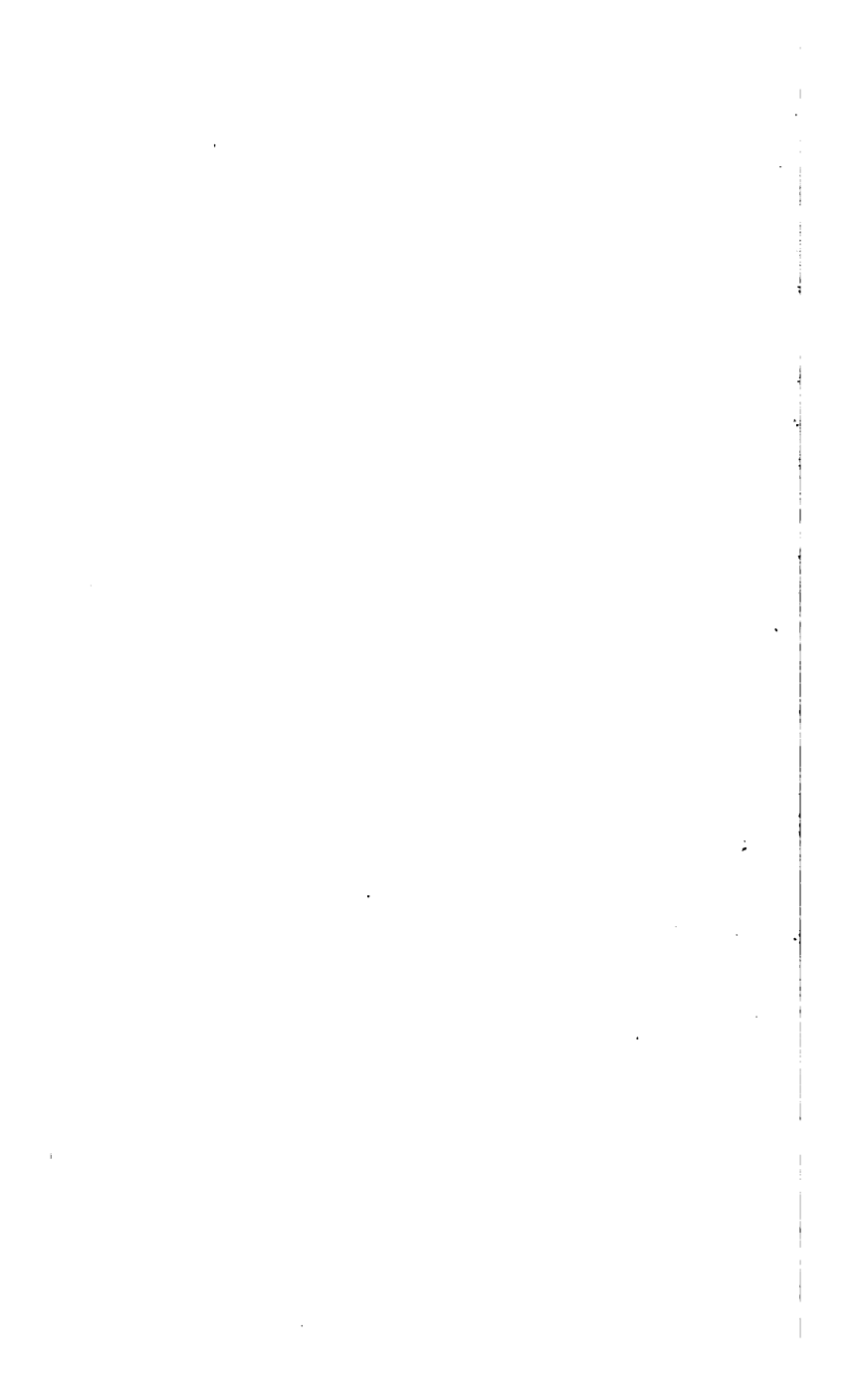












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**LIVES**

OF

**THE NOVELISTS.**

**BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.**

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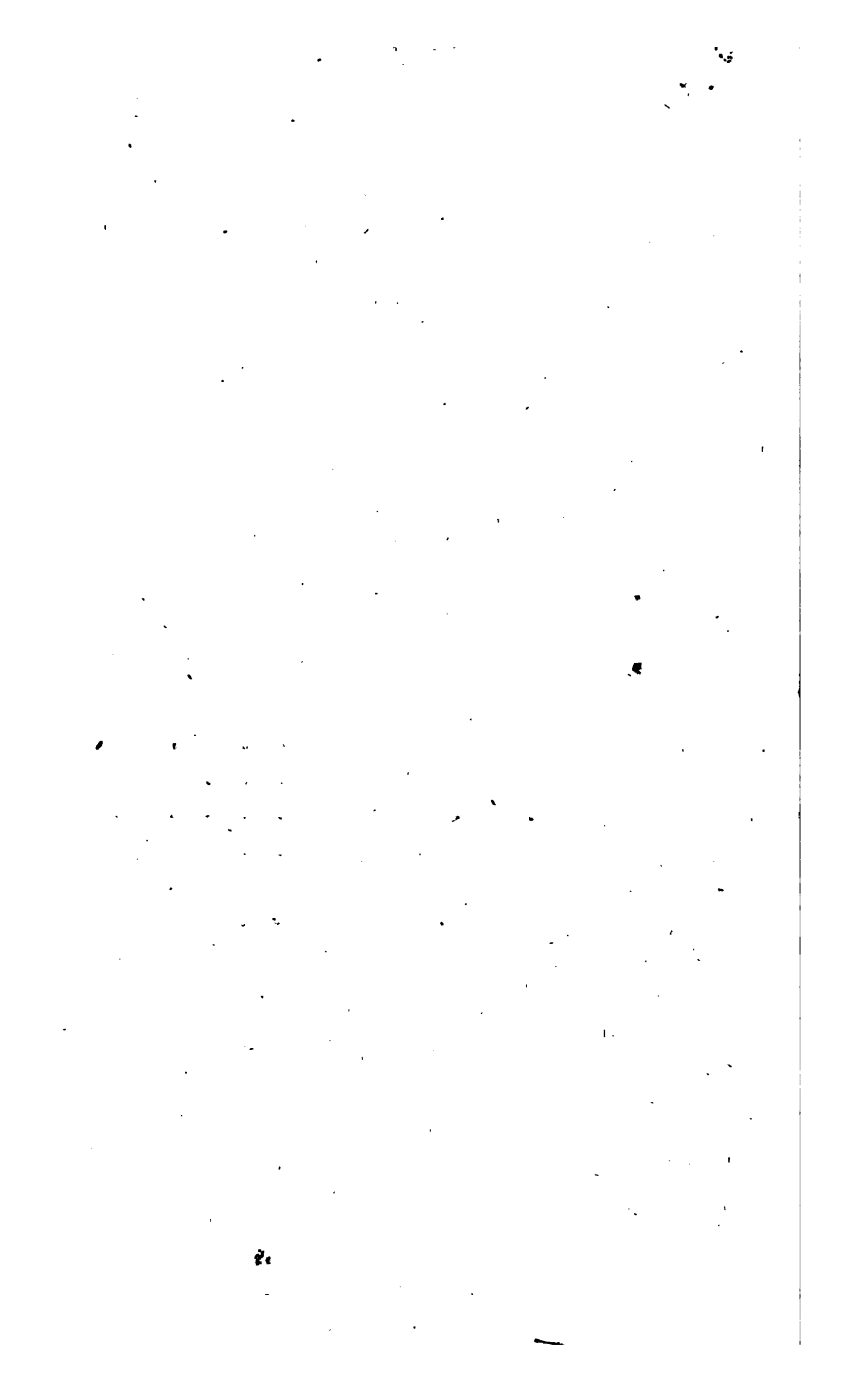
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**LIVES.**  
**OF**  
**THE NOVELISTS.**

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**RICHARDSON.**

THE life of this excellent man and ingenious author, has been written with equal spirit and candour, by Mrs. Barbauld, a name long dear to elegant literature, and is prefixed to her publication of the author's Correspondence, published by Phillips, in six volumes, in 1804. The leading circumstances of these simple annals are necessarily extracted from that performance, to which the present editor has no means of adding any thing of consequence.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON was born in Derbyshire, in the year 1689. His father was one of many sons, sprung from a family of middling note, which had been so far reduced, that the children were brought up to mechanical trades. His mother was also decently descended, but an orphan, left such in

infancy, by the death of her father and mother, cut off, within half an hour of each other, by the great pestilence, in 1663. Her name is not mentioned. His father was a joiner, and connected, by employment, with the unhappy Duke of Monmouth, after whose execution, he retired to Shrewsbury, apprehensive, perhaps, of a fate similar to that of College, his brother in trade, and well known, in those times, by the title of the Protestant Joiner.

Having sustained severe losses in trade, the elder Richardson was unable to give his son Samuel more than a very ordinary education; and our author, who was to rise so high in one department of literature, was left unacquainted with any language excepting his own. Under all these disadvantages, and perhaps in some degree owing to their existence, young Richardson very early followed, with a singular bias, the course which was most likely to render his name immortal. We give his own words, for they cannot be amended:—

“I recollect that I was early noted for having invention. I was not fond of play as other boys; my school-fellows used to call me *Serious* and *Gravity*, and five of them particularly delighted to single me out, either for a walk, or at their father’s houses, or at mine, to tell them stories, as they phrased it. Some I told them from my reading, as true, others from my head, as mere invention, of which they would be most fond, and often were

affected by them. One of them particularly, I remember, was for putting me to write a history, as he called it, on the model of Tommy Pots. I now forget what it was, only that it was of a servant-man preferred by a young lady (for his goodness) to a lord, who was a libertine. All my stories carried with them, I am bold to say, a useful moral.”\*

But young Richardson found a still more congenial body of listeners among the female sex. An old lady, indeed, seems to have resented an admonitory letter, in which the future teacher of morals contrasted her pretensions to religion with her habitual indulgence in slander and backbiting; but with the young and sentimental his reception was more gracious. “As a bashful, and not forward boy,” he says, “I was an early favourite with all the young women of taste and reading in the neighbourhood. Half a dozen of them, when met to work with their needles, used, when they got a book they liked, and thought I should, to borrow me to read to them; their mothers sometimes with them, and both mothers and daughters used to be pleased with the observations they put me upon making. I was not more than thirteen, when three of these young women, unknown to each other, having an high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love secrets, in order to induce me to

\* Life of Richardson, vol. i. pp. 36, 37.

give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lovers' letters; nor did any one of them ever know that I was the secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, and even repulse, when an offence was either given or taken, at the very time that the heart of the chider or repulser was open before me, overflowing with esteem and affection, and the fair repulser, dreading to be taken at her word, directing *this* word, or *that* expression to be softened or changed. One, highly gratified with her lover's fervour and vows of everlasting love, has said, when I have asked her direction, I cannot tell you what to write, but (her heart on her lips) you cannot write too kindly. All her fear was only, that she should incur slight for her kindness."\*

His father had nourished some ambitious views of dedicating young Richardson to the ministry, but as his circumstances denied him the means of giving him necessary education, Samuel was destined to that profession most nearly connected with literature, and was bound apprentice to Mr. John Wilde, of Stationers' Hall, in the year 1706. Industrious, as well as intelligent, regulated in his habits, and diverted by no headstrong passion from the strictest course of duty, Richardson made rapid progress in his employment as a printer.

\* Life of Richardson, vol. i. pp. 39, 40.

"I served," he says, "a diligent seven years to it; to a master who grudged every hour to me that tended not to his profit, even of those times of leisure and diversion, which the refractoriness of my fellow-servants *obliged* him to allow them, and were usually allowed by other masters to their apprentices. I stole from the hours of rest and relaxation, my reading times for improvement of my mind: and being engaged in a correspondence with a gentleman, greatly my superior in degree, and of ample fortune, who, had he lived, intended high things for me, those were all the opportunities I had in my apprenticeship to carry it on. But this little incident I may mention; I took care that even my candle was of my own purchasing, that I might not, in the most trifling instance, make my master a sufferer (and who used to call me the pillar of his house,) and not to disable myself by watching or sitting up, to perform my duty to him in the day-time."\*

The correspondence betwixt Richardson and the gentleman who had so well selected an object of patronage, was voluminous; but at the untimely death of his friend, it was, at his particular desire, consigned to the flames.

Several years more were spent in the obscure drudgery of the printing-house, ere Richardson

\* Life of Richardson, vol. i. pp. 41, 42.

took out his freedom and set up as a master printer. His talents for literature were soon discovered, and, in addition to his proper business, he used to oblige the booksellers, by furnishing them with prefaces, dedications, and such like garnishing of the works submitted to his press. He printed several of the popular periodical papers of the day, and, at length, through the interest of Mr. Onslow, the Speaker, obtained the lucrative employment of printing the Journals of the House of Commons, by which he must have reaped considerable advantages, although he occasionally had to complain of delay of payment on the part of government.

Punctual in his engagements, and careful in the superintendence of his business, fortune and respect, its sure accompaniments, began to flow in upon Richardson. In 1754, he was chosen Master of the Stationers' Company ; and, in 1760, he purchased a moiety of the patent of printer to the King, which seems to have added considerably to his revenue. He was now a man in very easy circumstances, and, besides his premises in Salisbury Court, he enjoyed the luxury of a villa, first at North End, near Hammersmith, afterwards at Parson's-green.

Richardson was twice married, first to Allington Wilde, his master's daughter, and after her death, in 1731, to the sister of James Leake, bookseller, who survived her distinguished husband. He has

made a feeling commemoration of the family misfortunes which he sustained, in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh. "I told you, madam, that I have been married twice, both times happily; you will guess so, as to my first, when I tell you that I cherish the memory of my lost wife to this hour; and as to the second, when I assure you, that I can do so without derogating from the merits of, or being disallowed by, my present, who speaks of her, on all occasions, as respectfully and affectionately as I do myself.

"By my first wife, I had five sons and one daughter, some of them living to be delightful prattlers, with all the appearances of sound health, lively in their features, and promising as to their minds; and the death of one of them I doubt, accelerating, from grief, that of the otherwise laudably afflicted mother. I have had, by my present wife, five girls and one boy; I have buried of these, the promising boy, and one girl: four girls I have living, all at present very good; their mother a true and instructing mother to them.

"Thus have I lost six sons (all my sons), and two daughters, every one of which, to answer your question, I parted with, with the utmost regret. Other heavy deprivations of friends very near and very dear have I also suffered. I am very susceptible, I will venture to say, of impressions of this nature. A father, an honest worthy father, I lost by

the accident of a broken thigh, snapped by a sudden jerk, endeavouring to recover a slip, passing through his own yard. My father, whom I attended in every stage of his last illness, I long mourned for. Two brothers, very dear to me, I lost abroad. A friend, more valuable than most brothers, was taken from me. No less than eleven affecting deaths in two years! My nerves were so affected with these repeated blows that I have been forced, after trying the whole *materia medica*, and consulting many physicians, as the only palliative (not a remedy to be expected), to go into a regimen; and for seven years past have I forborne wine, and flesh and fish; and at this time, I and all my family are in mourning for a good sister, with whom neither I would have parted, could I have had my choice. From these affecting dispensations, will you not allow me, madam, to remind an unthinking world, immersed in pleasures, what a life this is that they are so fond of, and to arm them against the affecting changes of it?"\*

But this amiable and excellent man was not deprived of the most pleasing exercise of his affections, notwithstanding the breaches which had been made among his offspring. Four daughters survived to render those duties which the affectionate temper of their father rendered peculiarly precious to him. Mary was married, during her father's life

\* *Life of Richardson*, vol. i, pp. 48, 49, 50.



time, to Mr. Ditcher, a respectable surgeon at Bath. His daughter Martha, who had been his principal amanuensis, became, after his decease, the wife of Edward Bridgen, Esq., and Sarah married Mr. Crowther, surgeon, in Boswell court. Anne, a woman of a most amiable disposition, but whose weak health had often alarmed the affection of her parents, survived, nevertheless, her sisters, as well as her parents. A nephew of Richardson paid him, in his declining years, the duties of a son, and assisted him in the conducting of his business, which concludes all it is necessary to say concerning the descendants and connexions of this distinguished author.

The private life of Richardson has nothing to detain the biographer. We have mentioned the successive opportunities which cautiously, yet ably, improved, led him to eminence in his highly respectable profession. He was unceasingly industrious; led astray by no idle views of speculation, and seduced by no temptations to premature expenditure. Industry brought independence, and, finally, wealth in its train; and that well won fortune was husbanded with prudence, and expended with liberality. A kind and liberal master, he was eager to encourage his servants to persevere in the same course of patient labour by which he had himself attained fortune; and it is said to have been his common practice to hide half a crown among the types, that it might reward the diligence of the work-

man who should first be in the office in the morning. His hospitality was of the most unlimited, as well as the most judicious kind. One of his correspondents describes him as sitting at his door like an old patriarch, and inviting all who passed by to enter and be refreshed;—"and this," says Mrs. Barbauld, "whether they brought with them the means of amusing their host, or only required his kind notice and that of his family." He was generous and benevolent to distressed authors, a class of men with whom his profession brought him into contact, and had occasion, more than once, to succour Dr. Johnson, during his days of poverty, and to assist his efforts to force himself into public notice. The domestic revolutions of his life, after mentioning the losses he had sustained in his family, may be almost summed in two great events. He changed his villa, in which he indulged, like other wealthy citizens, from North End to Parsons Green; and his printing establishment, from the one side of Salisbury Court to the other; which last alteration, he complains, did not meet Mrs. Richardson's approbation.

If we look yet closer into Richardson's private life (and who loves not to know the slightest particulars concerning a man of his genius?) we find so much to praise and so very little deserving censure, that we almost think we are reading the description of one of the amiable characters he has drawn in his own works.

A love of the human species ; a desire to create happiness and to witness it ; a life undisturbed by passion, and spent in doing good ; pleasures which centred in elegant conversation, in bountiful hospitality, in the exchange of the kindly intercourse of life, marked the worth and unsophisticated simplicity of the good man's character. He loved children, and knew the rare art of winning their attachment ; for, partaking in that respect the sagacity of the canine race, they are not to be deceived by dissembled attention. A lady, who shared the hospitality of Richardson, and gives an excellent account of the internal regulation of his virtuous and orderly family, remembers creeping to his knees, and hanging on his words, as well as the good nature with which he backed her petitions, to be permitted to remain a little longer when she was summoned to bed, and his becoming her guarantee, that she would not require the servant's assistance to put her to bed, and to extinguish the candle. Trifling as these recollections may seem, they are pleasing proofs that the author of *Clarissa* was, in private life, the mild, good man which we wish to suppose him.

The predominant failing of Richardson seems certainly to have been vanity—vanity naturally excited by his great and unparalleled popularity at home and abroad, and by the continual and concentrated admiration of the circle in which he lived. Such a weakness finds root in the mind of every one

who has obtained general applause, but Richardson fostered and indulged its growth, which a man of firmer character would have crushed and restrained. The cup of Circe converted men into beasts; and that of praise, when deeply and eagerly drained, seldom fails to make wise men in some degree fools. There seems to have been a want of masculine firmness in Richardson's habits of thinking, which combined with his natural tenderness of heart in inducing him to prefer the society of women; and women, from the quickness of their feelings, as well as their natural desire to please, are always the admirers, or rather the idolaters, of genius, and generally its willing flatterers. Richardson was in the daily habit of seeing, conversing, and corresponding with many of the fair sex; and the unvaried and, it would seem, the inexhaustible theme, was his own writings. Hence Johnson, whose loftier pride never suffered him to cherish the meaner foible of vanity, has passed upon Richardson, after a just tribute to his worth, the severe sentence recorded by Boswell: "I only remember that he expressed a high value for his talents and virtues, but that his perpetual study was to ward off petty inconveniences, and to procure petty pleasures; that his love of continual superiority was such, that he took care always to be surrounded by women, who listened to him implicitly, and did not venture to contradict his opinions; and that his desire of distinction was so great, that

he used to give large vails to Speaker Onslow's servants, that they might treat him with respect."\*

An anecdote, which seems to confirm Johnson's statement, is given by Boswell, on authority of a lady who was present when the circumstances took place. A gentleman, who had lately been at Paris, sought, while in a large company at Richardson's villa of North End, to gratify the landlord, by informing him that he had seen his *Clarissa* lying on the king's brother's table. Richardson, observing that a part of the company were engaged in conversation apart, affected not to hear what had been said, but took advantage of the first general pause, to address the gentleman with, "Sir, I think you were saying something about——;" and then stopped, in a flutter of expectation; which his guest mortified by replying: "A mere trifle, sir, not worth repeating."† The truth seems to be, that Richardson,

\* Life of Richardson, vol. i. pp. 171, 172. This character was given at the house of a venerable Scottish judge, now no more, who was so great admirer of *Sir Charles Grandison*, that he was said to read that work over once every year in the course of his life.

† Johnson, himself, felt pride on finding his Dictionary in Lord Scarsdale's dressing room, and pointed it out to his friend, with the classical quotation, *Quæ terra nostri non plena laboris*. Yet, under correction of both these great authors, the more substantial fame is to find a popular work, not in the closet of the great, who buy every book that bears a name, but in the cabins of the poor, who must have made some sacrifices to effect the purchase.

by nature shy, and of a nervous constitution, limited also by a very narrow education, cared not to encounter in conversation with those rougher spirits of the age, where criticism might have had too much severity in it. And he seems to have been reserved even in the presence of Johnson, though bound to him by obligation, and although that mighty aristarch professed to have the talent of "making him rear," and calling forth his powers. Nor does he appear to have associated much with any of the distinguished geniuses of the age, saving Dr. Young, with whom he corresponded late in life. Aaron Hill, who patriotically endeavoured to make him a convert to wines of British manufacture; and Mr. Edwards, author of the *Canons of Criticism*, though both clever men, do not deserve to be mentioned as exceptions.

The society of Richardson was limited to a little circle of amiable and accomplished persons, who were contented to allow a central position to the author of *Clarissa*, and to revolve around him in inferior orbits. The families of Highmore and Duncombe produced more than one individual of this description; and besides Mrs. Donellan, and the Misses Fielding, whom Richardson loved, notwithstanding the offences of their brother, there was a Miss Mulso, Miss Westcombe, and other ladies, besides, full of veneration for the kind instructor, whom they were permitted to term their adopted

father. While *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison* were in progress, Richardson used to read a part of his labours to some of this chosen circle every morning, and receive, it may be readily supposed, a liberal tribute of praise, with a very moderate portion of criticism. Miss Highmore, who inherited a paternal taste for painting, has recorded one of those scenes in a small drawing, where Richardson, in a morning-gown and cap, is introduced, reading the manuscript of *Sir Charles Grandison* to such a little group.

This was all very amiable, though perhaps bordering on an effeminate love of flattery and applause. But it must be owned that our author disdained not flattery from less pure hands than those of his ordinary companions. We will not dwell upon poor Lætitia Pilkington, whose wants, rather than her extravagant praises, may be supposed to have conciliated the kindness of Richardson, notwithstanding the infamy of her character. But we are rather scandalised that the veteran iniquity of Old Cibber should not have excluded him from the intimacy of the virtuous Richardson, and that the grey profligate could render himself acceptable to the author of *Sir Charles Grandison* by such effusions of vulgar vivacity as the following, which we cannot forbear inserting.—“I have just finished the sheets you favoured me with; but never found so strong a proof of your sly ill-nature as to have hung

me up upon tenters, till I see you again Z—ds ! I have not patience, till I know what's become of her.—Why, you ! I don't know what to call you ! Ah ! ah ! you may laugh if you please : but how will you be able to look me in the face, if the lady should ever be able to show *hers* again ? What piteous, d—d disgraceful pickle have you plunged her in ? For God's sake send me the sequel, or—I don't know what to say !”\* Yet another delectable quotation from the letters of that merry old good-for-nothing, which, as addressed by a rake of the theatre to the most sentimental author of the age, and as referring to one of his favourite and most perfect characters, is, in its way, a matchless specimen of elegant vivacity.—“ The delicious meal I made of Miss Byron on Sunday last has given me an appetite for another slice of her, off from the spit, before she is served up to the public table. If about five o'clock to-morrow afternoon will not be inconvenient, Mrs. Brown and I will come and piddle upon a bit more of her ; but pray let your whole family, with Mrs. Richardson at the head of them, come in for their share.”†

An appetite for praise, and an over-indulgence of that appetite, not only teaches an author to be gratified with the applause of the unworthy, and to prefer it to the censure of the wise, but it leads to the

\* Correspondence of Richardson, vol. ii. pp. 172, 173.

† Correspondence of Richardson, vol. ii. p. 176.



less pardonable error of begrudging to others their due share of public favour. Richardson was too good, too kind a man to let literary envy settle deep in his bosom, yet an overweening sense of his own importance seems to have prevented his doing entire justice to the claims of others. He appears to have been rather too prone to believe ill of those authors, against whose works exceptions, in point of delicacy, might justly be taken. He has inserted in his Correspondence an account of Swift's earlier life, highly injurious to the character of that eminent writer; and which the industry of Dr. Barret has since shown to be a gross misrepresentation. The same tone of feeling has made him denounce, with the utmost severity, the indecorum of *Tristram Shandy*, without that tribute of applause which, in every view of the case, was so justly due to the genius of the author. Richardson seems also to have joined Aaron Hill in the cuckoo-song, that Pope had written himself out;—and finally, the dislike which he manifests towards Fielding, though it originated in a gratuitous insult on the part of the latter, breaks out too often, and is too anxiously veiled under an affectation of charity and candour, not to lead us to suspect that the author of *Tom Jones* was at last as obnoxious from the success as from the alleged immorality of his productions. It would have been generous to have reflected, that, while his own bark lay safe in harbour, or was waft-

ed on by the favouring gale of applause, his less fortunate rival had to struggle with the current and the storm. But this disagreeable subject we have already canvassed in Fielding's life, and we will not further dwell upon it. Of all pictures of literary life, that which exhibits two men of transcendent, though different talents, engaged in the depreciation of each other, is most humbling to human nature, most unpleasing to a candid and enlightened reader. Excepting against Fielding, Richardson seems to have nourished no literary feud. But it is to be regretted that, in his Correspondence, we find few traces that he either loved or admired contemporary genius.

It may appear invidious to dwell thus long on a sufficiently venial speck in a character so fair and amiable. But it is no useless lesson to show that a love of praise, and a feeling of literary emulation, not to say vanity, foibles pardonable in themselves, and rarely separated from the poetical temperament, lead to consequences detrimental to the deserved reputation of the most ingenious author, and the most worthy man, as a dead fly will pollute the most precious unguent. Every author, but especially those who cultivate the lighter kinds of literature, should teach themselves the stern lesson, that their art must fall under the frequent censure, *non est tanti*, and, for this reason they should avoid, as they would the circle of Alcina, that sort of society,

who so willingly form around every popular writer an atmosphere of assentation and flattery.

Dismissing these considerations, we cannot omit to state that Richardson's correspondence with one of his most intelligent and enthusiastic admirers, commenced, and was for some time carried on, in a manner which might have formed a pleasing incident in one of the author's own romances. This was Lady Bradshaigh, the wife of Sir Roger Bradshaigh of Haigh, in Lancashire, whose very considerable talent, and ardent taste for literature, had to contend with the prejudices which in those days seemed to have rendered it ridiculous for a lady of rank and fashion, the wife of a country gentleman of estate and consideration, to enter into correspondence with a *professed* author. To gratify the strong propensity she felt to engage in literary intercourse with an author of Richardson's distinction, Lady Bradshaigh had recourse to the romantic expedient of entering into correspondence with him under an assumed name, and with all the precautions against discovery which are sometimes resorted to for less honest purposes. Richardson and his incognita maintained a close exchange of letters, until they seem on both sides to have grown desirous of becoming personally known to each other; and the author was induced to walk in the Park at a particular hour, and to send an accurate description of his person, that his fair correspondent might be

able, herself unknown, to distinguish him from the vulgar herd of passengers. The following portrait exhibits all the graphical accuracy with which the author was accustomed to detail the appearance of his imaginary personages, and is at the same time very valuable, as it describes a man of genius in whom great powers of observing life and manners were combined with bashful and retired habits.—“ I go through the Park once or twice a week to my little retirement ; but I will for a week together be in it every day three or four hours, at your command, till you tell me you have seen a person who answers to this description ; namely, short ; rather plump than emaciated, notwithstanding his complaints ; about five feet five inches ; fair wig ; lightish cloth coat, all black besides ; one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat usually, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support when attacked by sudden tremors or startings, and dizziness, which too frequently attack him, but thank God, not so often as formerly ; looking directly fore-right, as passers-by would imagine, but observing all that stirs on either hand of him, without moving his short neck ; hardly ever turning back ; of a light brown complexion ; teeth not yet failing him ; smoothish-faced and ruddy-checked ; at some times looking to be about sixty-five, at other times much younger ; a regular even pace, stealing away ground

rather than seeming to rid it; a grey eye, too often overclouded by mistiness from the head; by chance lively; very lively it will be if he have hope of seeing a lady whom he loves and honours; his eye always on the ladies; if they have very large hoops, he looks down and supercilious, and as if he would be thought wise, but perhaps the sillier for that; as he approaches a lady, his eye is never fixed first upon her face, but upon her feet, and thence he raises it up pretty quickly for a dull eye; and one would think (if we thought him at all worthy of observation) that from her air, and (the last beheld) her face, he sets her down in his mind as so or so, and then passes on to the next object he meets; only then looking back if he greatly likes or dislikes, as if he would see if the lady appear to be all of a piece, in the one light or in the other. Are these marks distinct enough, if you are resolved to keep all the advantages you set out with? And from this odd, this grotesque figure, think you, madam, that you have any thing to apprehend? Any thing that will not rather promote than check your mirth? I dare be bold to say, (and allow it too,) that you would rather see this figure than any other you ever saw, whenever you should find yourself graver than you wish to be.”\*

Lady Bradshaigh, like other ladies upon similar occasions, could not resist the opportunity of exer-

\* Correspondence of Richardson, vol. iv. pp. 290, 291, 292.

cising a little capricious tyranny. Richardson's walks in the Park were for some time unnoticed. Both parties seem to have indulged in a gentle coquetry, until both were likely to lose temper, and the complaints on the gentleman's side became a little keener and eager. At length Lady Bradshaigh dropped the mask, and continued afterwards to be in her own person the valued correspondent of the author. It is but justice to say, that the sense and spirit with which she supports her own views, even when contrary to those of Richardson, render her letters the most agreeable in the collection, and constitute a great difference betwixt her and some of the author's female correspondents, who are satisfied with becoming the echoes of his sentiments and opinions. Lady Bradshaigh had a sister, Lady Echlin, who also corresponded with Richardson; but although she appears to have been an excellent woman, her letters want both the vivacity and talent displayed in those of Lady Bradshaigh. Yet Lady Echlin, too, had her moments of ambitious criticism. She even tried her hand at reforming *Lovelace*, as Mrs. Barbauld informs us, by the aid of a Dr. Christian; a consummation, as the reader will anticipate, much better meant than successfully executed.

Neither the admiration of the public, the applause of admirers, nor the deserved affection of his friends and family, could screen this amiable author from

his share in the lot of humanity. Besides his family misfortunes, Richardson was afflicted with indifferent health, in the painful shape of nervous disorders. Sedentary habits and close attention to business had rendered a constitution delicate which nature had never made strong; and it will readily be believed, that the workings of an imagination, constantly labouring in the fields of fiction, increased rather than relieved, complaints which affected his nerves at an early period. If, as he somewhere says, he made the distress of his character his own, and wept for *Clarissa* and *Clementina*, as if they had had not been the creatures of his own fancy, the exhaustion of his spirits must have exasperated his malady. His nerves were latterly so much shaken, that he could not convey a glass of wine to his mouth, unless it was put into a large tumbler; and unable to undergo the fatigue of communicating with the principal superintendent of his business, who chanced unluckily to be hard of hearing, all communication between them was maintained by means of writing. He did not long survive the space assigned by the Psalmist as the ordinary duration of human life. On the 4th of July, 1761, Samuel Richardson died, aged seventy-two, and was buried, according to his own directions, beside his first wife, in the middle aisle of St. Bride's church, followed by the affectionate grief of those who were admitted to his society, and the sorrow

“About twenty-five years ago, a gentleman, with whom I was intimately acquainted, but who, alas, is now no more! [probably the correspondent of fortune and rank, mentioned p. 5] met with such a story as that of Pamela, in one of the summer tours which he used to take for his pleasure, attended with one servant only. At every inn he put up at, it was his way to inquire after curiosities in its neighbourhood, either ancient or modern; and particularly he asked who was the owner of a fine house, as it seemed to him, beautifully situated, which he had passed by (describing it,) within a mile or two of the inn.

“It was a fine house, the landlord said, the owner was Mr. B—, a gentleman of a large estate in more counties than one. That his and his lady’s history engaged the attention of every body who came that way, and put a stop to all other inquiries, though the house and gardens were well worth seeing. The lady, he said, was one of the greatest beauties in England; but the qualities of her mind had no equal; beneficent, prudent, and equally beloved and admired by high and low. That she had been taken at twelve years of age, for the sweetness of her manners and modesty, and for an understanding above her years, by Mr. B—’s mother, a truly worthy lady, to wait on her person. Her parents, ruined by suretiships, were remarkably honest and pious, and had instilled into their daugh-



ter's mind the best principles. When their misfortunes happened first, they attempted a little school, in their village, where they were much beloved; he teaching writing and the first rules of arithmetic to boys; his wife plain needle-work to girls, and to knit and spin; but that it answered not; and when the lady took their child, the industrious man earned his bread by day-labour, and the lowest kind of husbandry.

“That the girl, improving daily in beauty, modesty, and genteel and good behaviour, by the time she was fifteen, engaged the attention of her lady's son, a young gentleman of free principles, who, on her lady's death, attempted, by all manner of temptations and devices, to seduce her. That she had recourse to as many innocent stratagems to escape the snares laid for her virtue; once, however, in despair, having been near drowning; that at last, her noble resistance, watchfulness, and excellent qualities, subdued him, and he thought fit to make her his wife. That she behaved herself with so much dignity, sweetness, and humility, that she made herself beloved of every body, and even by his relations, who at first despised her; and now had the blessings both of rich and poor, and the love of her husband.

“The gentleman who told me this added, that he had the curiosity to stay in the neighbourhood from Friday to Sunday, that he might see this

happy couple at church, from which they never absented themselves: that, in short, he did see them; that her deportment was all sweetness, ease, and dignity mingled; that he never saw a lovelier woman: that her husband was as fine a man, and seemed even proud of his choice; and that she attracted the respects of the persons of rank present, and had the blessings of the poor.—The relater of the story told me all this with transport.

“This, sir, was the foundation of Pamela’s story; but little did I think to make a story of it for the press. That was owing to this occasion.

“Mr. Rivington and Mr. Osborne, whose names are on the title-page, had long been urging me to give them a little book (which they said, they were often asked after) of familiar letters on the useful concerns in common life; and at last I yielded to their importunity, and began to recollect such subjects as I thought would be useful in such a design, and formed several letters accordingly, and, among the rest, I thought of giving one or two as cautions to young folks circumstanced as Pamela was. Little did I think, at first, of making one, much less two volumes of it. But, when I began to recollect what had, so many years before, been told me by my friend, I thought the story, if written in an easy and natural manner, suitable to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course

of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and, dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue. I, therefore, gave way to enlargement; and so Pamela became as you see her. But so little did I hope for the approbation of judges, that I had not the courage to send the two volumes to your ladies, until I found the books well received by the public.

“While I was writing the two volumes, my worthy-hearted wife, and the young lady who is with us, when I had read them some part of the story, which I had begun without their knowing it, used to come into my little closet every night, with—‘Have you any more of Pamela, Mr. R? we are come to hear a little more of Pamela,’ &c. This encouraged me to prosecute it, which I did so diligently, through all my other business, that, by a memorandum on my copy, I began it November 10, 1739, and finished it January 10, 1739—40. And I have often, censurable as I might be thought for my vanity for it, and lessening to the taste of my two female friends, had the story of Moliere’s *Old Woman* in my thoughts upon the occasion.

“If justly low were my thoughts of this little history, you will wonder how it came by such an assuming and very impudent preface. It was thus.—The approbation of these two female friends, and

of two more, who were so kind as to give me prefaces for it, but which were much too long and circumstantial, as I thought, made me resolve myself on writing a preface; I, therefore, spirited by the good opinion of these four, and knowing that the judgments of nine parts in ten of readers were but in hanging-sleeves, struck a bold stroke in the preface you see, having the umbrage of the editor's character\* to screen myself behind.—And, thus, sir, all is out.”†

Pamela, of which the reader has thus learned the origin, appeared in 1740, and made a most powerful sensation on the public. Hitherto, romances had been written, generally speaking, in the old French taste, containing the protracted amours of Princes and Princesses, told in language coldly extravagant, and metaphysically absurd. In these wearisome performances there appeared not the most distant allusion to the ordinary tone of feeling, the slightest attempt to paint mankind as it exists in the ordinary walks of life—all was rant and bombast, stilt and buskin. It will be Richardson's eternal praise, did he merit no more, that he tore from his personages those painted vizards, which concealed, under a clumsy and affected disguise, every thing like the natural lineaments of the human countenance, and

\* Under the character of editor, he gave great commendation to the letters, for which he was blamed by some of his friends.

† *Life of Richardson*, vol. i. pp. 69-76.

placed them before us bare-faced, in all the actual changes of feature and complexion, and all the light and shade of human passion. It requires a reader to be in some degree acquainted with, the huge folios of inanity, over which our ancestors yawned themselves to sleep, ere he can estimate the delight they must have experienced from this unexpected return to truth and nature.

The simplicity of Richardson's tale aided the effect of surprise. An innocent young woman, whose virtue a dissolute master assails by violence, as well as all the milder means of seduction, conquers him at last by persevering in the paths of rectitude; and is rewarded by being raised to the station of his wife, the lawful participator in his rank and fortune. Such is the simple story by which the world was so much surprised and affected.

The judicious criticism of Mrs. Barbauld has pointed out that the character of Pamela is far from attaining an heroic cast of virtue. On the contrary, there is a strain of cold-blooded prudence which runs through all the latter part of the novel, to which we are obliged almost to deny the name of virtue. She appears originally to have no love for Mr. B.; no passion to combat in her own bosom; no treachery to subdue in the garrison while the enemy was before the walls. Richardson voluntarily evaded giving this colouring to his tale,

because it was intended more for edification than for effect ; and because the example of a *soubrette* falling desperately in love with a handsome young master, might have been imitated by many in that rank of life, who could not have defended themselves exactly like Pamela against the object of so dangerous a passion. Besides, Richardson was upon principle unwilling to exhibit his favoured characters as greatly subject to violent passion of any kind, and was much disposed to dethrone Cupid, whom romance writers had installed as the literal sovereign of gods and men. Still the character of Pamela is somewhat sunk by the eager gratitude with which she accepts the hand of a tyrannical and cruel master, when he could not at a cheaper rate make himself master of her person. There is a parade of generosity on his side, and of creeping submission on hers, which the case by no means calls for ; and unless, like her namesake in Pope's satire, she can console herself with the "gilt chariot and the Flanders mares," we should have thought her more likely to be happy had she become the wife of poor Mr. Williams, of whose honest affection she makes somewhat too politic a use in the course of her trials, and whom she discards too coolly when better prospects seem to open upon her.

It is perhaps invidious to enter too closely upon the general tendency of a work of entertainment. But when the admirers of *Pamela* challenged for

that work the merit of doing more good than twenty sermons, we demur to the motion. Its good effects must of course have operation among young women in circumstances somewhat similar to those of the heroine ; and, in that rank, it may be questioned whether the example is not as well calculated to encourage a spirit of rash enterprise, as of virtuous resistance. If Pamela became Esquire B—'s lady, it was only on account of her virtuous resistance to his criminal attacks ; but it may occur to an humble maiden (and the case we believe is not hypothetical) that to merit Pamela's reward, she must go through Pamela's trials ; and that there can be no great harm in affording some encouragement to the assailant. We need not add how dangerous this experiment must be for both parties.

But we have elsewhere intimated an opinion, that the direct and obvious moral to be deduced from a fictitious narrative is of much less consequence to the public than the mode in which the story is treated in the course of its details. If the author introduces scenes which excite evil passions, if he familiarizes the mind of the readers with impure ideas, or sophisticates their understanding with false views of morality, it will be an unavailing defence that, in the end of his book, he has represented virtue as triumphant. In the same manner, although some objections may be made to the deductions which the author desired, and expected should be drawn from

the story of *Pamela*, yet the pure and modest character of the English maiden is so well maintained during the work; her sorrows and afflictions are born with so much meekness; her little intervals of hope or comparative tranquillity break in on her troubles so much like the specks of blue sky through a cloudy atmosphere, that the whole recollection is soothing, tranquillizing, and, doubtless, edifying. We think little of Mr. B—, his character, or his motives, and are only delighted with the preferment of our favourite, because it seems to give so much satisfaction to herself. The pathetic passage in which she describes her ineffectual attempt to escape, may be selected, among many, as an example of the beautiful propriety and truth with which the author was able to throw himself into the character of his heroine, and to think and reason, and express those thoughts and reasons, exactly as she must have done, had the fictitious incident really befallen such a person.

The inferior persons are sketched with great truth and may be considered as a group of English portraits of the period. In particular, the characters of the father and mother, old Andrews and his wife, are, like that of Pamela herself, in the very best style of drawing and colouring; and the interview of the former with his landlord, when he inquires after the fate of his daughter, would have immortalized Richardson had he never written another line.



It may be here observed that, had the author lived in the present day, he would probably have thrown into the character of the deeply injured peasant a spirit of manly indignation, which the occasion demanded. But in Richardson's time, the bonds of subordination in society were drawn very strictly, and he himself appears to have had high and exaggerated ideas of the importance of wealth and rank, as well as of domestic authority of every kind. Mr. B— does not seem to have incurred any severe censure among his neighbours for the villanies which he practices upon Pamela; she herself supposes them more than atoned for by his condescension in wedding her, and consents to receive into favour even the unwomanly and infamous Mrs. Jewkes, because the old procuress had acted a part she should have been hanged for, at the command, forsooth, of a generous master. There is want of taste in this humiliation; and a touch of spirit upon the occasion would not have mis-become even the all-forgiving Pamela.

Notwithstanding such defects, which, in fact, only occur to us, upon a critical perusal, the pleasing simplicity of a tale so true to nature commanded the general and enthusiastic applause of the public. It was in vain that the mischievous wit of Fielding found a source for ridicule in that very simplicity of moral and of incident, and gave the world *Joseph Andrews*, an avowed parody upon the

*Pamela* of Richardson. It chanced, with that very humorous performance, as with the *Shepherd's Week* of Gay, that readers lost sight altogether of the satirical purpose with which it was written, and were delighted with it on account of its own intrinsic merit. We may be permitted to regret, therefore, the tone of mind with which Fielding composed a work, in professed ridicule of such genius as that of Richardson; but how can we wish that undone, without which Parson Adams would not have existed?

The success of *Pamela* induced some wretched imitator to carry on the story in a continuation, entitled *Pamela in High Life*. This intrusion provoked Richardson to a similar attempt, in which he represented *Pamela's* husband as reclaimed from the prosecution of a guilty intrigue, by the patient sorrows of his virtuous wife. The work met with the fate of other continuations, and has been always justly accounted an unnatural and unnecessary appendage to a tale so complete within itself as the first part of *Pamela*.

Eight years after the appearance of *Pamela*, Richardson, published *Clarissa*, the work on which his fame, as a classic of England, will rest for ever. The tale, like that of its predecessor, is very simple, but the scene is laid in a higher rank of life, the characters are drawn with a bolder pencil, and the whole accompaniments are of a far loftier mood.

Clarissa, a character as nearly approaching to perfection as the pencil of the author could draw, is persecuted by a tyrannical father and brother, an envious sister, and the other members of a family who devoted every thing to its aggrandizement, in order to compel her to marry a very disagreeable suitor. These intrigues and distresses she communicates, in a series of letters, to her friend Miss Howe, a young lady of an ardent, impetuous disposition, and an enthusiast in friendship. After a series of sufferings, rising almost beyond endurance, Clarissa is tempted to throw herself upon the protection of her admirer Lovelace, a character, in painting whom, Richardson has exerted his utmost skill, until he has attained the very difficult and critical point of rendering every reader pleased with his wit and abilities, even while detesting the villany of his conduct. Lovelace is represented as having devoted his life and talents to the subversion of female virtue; and not even the charms of Clarissa, or her unprotected situation, can reconcile him to the idea of marriage. This species of perverted Quixotry is not much understood in the present age, when a modern voluptuary seeks the gratification of his passions where it is most easily obtained, and is seldom at the trouble of assault, when there is any probability of the fortress being resolutely defended. But, in former days, when men, like Lord Baltimore, were found,

at the risk of life itself, capable of employing the most violent means for the ruin of innocence, a character approaching that of Lovelace was not perhaps so unnatural. That he should have been so successful in previous amours is not very probable; and, as Mrs. Barbauld justly observes, he was more likely to have been run through the body long before ever he saw Colonel Morden. But some exaggeration must be allowed to the author of a romance; and, considering the part which Lovelace had to perform, it was necessary that his character should be highly coloured. This perfidious lover, actuated, it would seem, as much by the love of intrigue and of enterprise, as by his desire to humble the Harlowe family, and lower the pride of this their beloved daughter, whose attachment to him was not of the devoted character which he conceived was due to his merits, forms a villainous scheme for the destruction of her virtue. Without the least regard for the character of a woman, whom he always seems to have intended for his wife at some future period, he contrives to lodge her with the keeper of a common brothel, and to place around her the inmates of such a place. At length, every effort to accomplish his guilty purpose having failed, he administers opiates, and violates the person of his victim while under their influence. But he obtains nothing by his crime, save infamy and remorse. The lady dies of a broken

heart, and he himself falls by the sword of one of her kinsmen.

It cannot be denied, that this story is attended with many improbabilities. Allowing for Lovelace's very peculiar character, admitting that his selfishness, his pride, and his love of intrigue had hardened his heart to all consequences, surrounded it, as he himself says, "with flint and callus," and induced him to prefer a crooked and most foul path to one which was fair and honourable, there is no excuse for Belford, as a man and a gentleman, keeping his friend's infamous secret. Nay, we are apt to blame Clarissa herself, who, in her escape to Hampstead, did not place herself under the guardianship of a magistrate. We will venture to say that Justice Fielding would have afforded her his most effectual protection; and that if Tomlinson, the false Miss Montague, or any other of Lovelace's agents, had ventured to appear in the office, they would have been committed by his worship as old acquaintances. In our own day, too, though that was not a feature of the writer's age, the whole story of the elopement would have flown on the wings of the newspapers, not to Hampstead and Highgate only, but to Truro and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and not a Mrs. Moore or Miss Rawlins in England but would have been too particularly acquainted "with the mysterious affair of Harlowe-place" to be deceived by the representations of

Lovelace. But it is unfair to tax an author too severely upon improbabilities, without conceding which his story could have no existence; and we have the less title to do so, because in the history of real life, that which is actually true bears often very little resemblance to that which is probable. If every assault were skilfully parried, and every man played with ability, life would become like a trial of skill with foils, or like a game at chess, and strength and address would no longer be defeated by time and chance, which, in the words of Solomon, happen unto all men.

The conduct of the injured Clarissa through the subsequent scenes, which are perhaps among the most affecting and sublime in the English school of romance, raise her, in her calamitous condition, so far above all around her, that her character beams on the reader with something like superhuman splendour. Our eyes weep, our hearts ache, yet our feelings triumph with the triumph of virtue, as it rises over all the odds which the deepest misfortune, and even degradation, have thrown into the scale. There is a noble pride amid the sorrow with which we contemplate the distresses of such a being as Clarissa, rising even over that personal dishonour which, when it has once taken place, under what circumstances soever, is generally understood to infer degradation. It was reserved to Richardson to show that there is a chastity of the soul, which

can beam out spotless and unsullied, even after that of the person has been violated; and the dignity of Clarissa, under her disgrace and her misfortunes, reminds us of the saying of the ancient poet, that a good man, struggling with the tide of adversity, and surmounting it, was a sight which the immortal gods might look down upon with pleasure. This is a subject which Mrs. Barbauld has dwelt upon with a suitable feeling of the dignity of her sex. The more contracted and limited view of Clarissa's merit, merely as resisting the efforts of a practised seducer, although it was unquestionably in Richardson's view, his biographer reasonably spurns, as degrading to womanhood. Clarissa, bred in a superior rank of life, led aside by no strong passion, courted by a lover who had immediate marriage in his power, must have been a subordinate person indeed, if incapable of repelling his attempts at dishonouring her person. I cannot avoid transcribing the excellent reflections which follow this reasoning. "The real moral of Clarissa is, that virtue is triumphant in every situation; that, in circumstances the most painful and degrading, in a prison, in a brothel, in grief, in distraction, in despair, it is still lovely, still commanding, still the object of our veneration, of our fondest affections; that if it is seated on the ground, it can still say with Constance,

'Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it!'

“The novelist that has produced this effect has performed his office well, and it is immaterial what particular maxim is selected under the name of a moral, while such are the reader’s feelings. If our feelings are in favour of virtue, the novel is virtuous; if of vice, the novel is vicious. The greatness of *Clarissa* is shown by her separating herself from her lover as soon as she perceives his dishonourable views; in her choosing death rather than a repetition of the outrage; in her rejection of those overtures of marriage, which a common mind might have accepted of, as a refuge against worldly dishonour; in her firm indignant carriage, mixed with calm patience and christian resignation; and in the greatness of mind with which she views and enjoys the approaches of death, and her meek forgiveness of her unfeeling relations.”

These arguments, however, were not at first readily admitted by Richardson’s warmest admirers. The first four volumes of *Clarissa* having appeared, and a report having been spread, that the catastrophe was to be unfortunate, many remonstrances were made on the subject by those readers who shrunk from the extreme pain inflicted by the tragical part of the narrative, and, laying aside the contemplation of the moral, complained, that in a professed work of amusement, the author had contrived to harrow up their feelings to a degree that was intolerably painful. Old Cibber raved on



the subject like a profane bedlamite ; and, what was perhaps of more consequence to Richardson, the rumour of Lovelace's success and Clarissa's death occasioned Lady Bradshaigh's opening her romantic correspondence with him, under the assumed name of Belfour. In reply to the expostulations of the latter, Richardson frankly stated his own noble plan, of which he had too just a conception, to alter it in compliance with the remonstrances of his correspondents.

"Indeed you are not particular in your wishes for a happy ending, as it is called : nor can I go through some of the scenes myself without being sensibly touched (did I not say that I was another Pygmalion ?). But yet I had to show, for example sake, a young lady struggling nobly with the greatest difficulties, and triumphing from the best motives, in the course of distresses, the tenth part of which would have sunk even manly hearts ; yet tenderly educated, born to affluence, naturally meek, although, where an exertion of spirit was necessary, manifesting herself to be a true heroine."\*

Defeated in this point, the friends and correspondents of Richardson became even more importunate for the reformation of Lovelace, and the winding up the story by his happy union with Clarissa. On this subject also Cibber ranted, and the

\* Correspondence of Richardson, vol. iv. p. 186.

ladies implored, with an earnestness that seems to imply at once, a belief that the persons in whom they interested themselves had an existence, and that it was in the power of the writer of their memoirs to turn their destiny which way he pleased ; and one damsel, eager for the conversion of Lovelace, implores Richardson to "save his soul ;" as if there had been actually a living sinner in the case, and his future state had depended on her admired author.

Against all these expostulations Richardson hardened himself. He knew, that to bestow *Clarissa* upon the repentant Lovelace, would have been to undermine the fabric he had built. This was the very purpose which the criminal had proposed to himself, in the atrocious crime he had committed, and it was to dismiss him from the scene rewarded, not punished. The sublimity of the moral would have been altogether destroyed, since vice would have been no longer rendered hateful and miserable through its very success, nor virtue honoured and triumphant even by its degradation. The death of *Clarissa* alone could draw down on the guilty head of her betrayer the just and necessary retribution, and his guilt was of far too deep a dye to be otherwise expiated. Besides, the author felt, and forcibly pointed out, the degradation which the fervent creation of his fancy must have sustained, could she, with all her wrongs forgotten, and with the duty im-

posed on her by matrimony, to love, honour, and obey her betrayer, have sat down the common-place good wife of her reformed rake. Indeed, those who peruse the work with attention, will perceive that the author has been careful, in the earlier stages of his narrative, to bar out every prospect of such a union. Notwithstanding the levities and constitutional good humour of Lovelace, his mind is too much perverted, his imagination too much inflamed by his own perverted Quixotism, and, above all, his heart is too much hardened, to render it possible for any one seriously to think of his conversion as sincere, or his union with Clarissa as happy. He had committed a crime for which he deserved death by the law of the country; and notwithstanding those good qualities with which the author has invested him, that he may not seem an actual incarnate fiend, there is no reader but feels vindictive pleasure when Morden passes the sword through his body.

On the other hand, Clarissa, reconciled to her violator, must have lost, in the eye of the reader, that dignity, with which the refusal of his hand, the only poor reparation he could offer, at present invests her; and it was right and fitting that a creature, every way so excellent, should, as is fabled of the ermine, pine to death on account of the stain with which she had been so injuriously sullied. We cannot, consistently with the high idea which we

have previously entertained of her purity of character, imagine her surviving the contamination. On the whole, as Richardson himself pleaded, *Clarissa* has, as the narrative presently stands, the greatest of triumphs, even in this world—the greatest even in and after the outrage, and because of the outrage, that any woman ever had.

It has often been observed, that the extreme severity of the parents and relatives in this celebrated novel does not belong to our day, or, perhaps, even to Richardson's; and that *Clarissa's* dutiful scruples at assuming her own estate, or extricating herself by Miss Howe's means, are driven to extremity. Something no doubt must be allowed for the license of an author, who must necessarily, in order to command interest and attention, extend his incidents to the extreme verge of probability; but besides it is well known, that at least within the century, the notions of the *patria potestas* were of a much severer nature than those now entertained; that forced marriages have actually taken place, and that in houses of considerable rank; that the voice of public opinion had then comparatively little effect upon great and opulent families, inhabiting their country seats, and living amid their own dependants, where strange violences were sometimes committed, under the specious pretext of enforcing domestic discipline. Each family was a little tribe within itself; and the near relations, like the elders among

the Jews, had their Sanhedrim, where resolutions were adopted, as laws to control the free will of each individual member. It is upon this family compact that the Harlowes ground the rights which they assert with so much tyranny ; and before the changes which have slackened the bonds of relationship, we believe that such incidents were not unfrequent. But whether we consider Richardson as exhibiting a state of manners which may have lingered in the remote parts of England down to his own time, or suppose that he coloured them according to his own invention, and particularly according to his high notions of the " awful rule and right supremacy," lodged in the head of a family, there can be no doubt of the spirit with which the picture is executed ; and particularly of the various gradations in which the Harlowe spirit exhibits itself, in the insolent and conceited brother, the mean and envious sister, the stern and unrelenting father, softened down in the elder brother James, and again roughened and exaggerated in the old seaman Anthony, each of whom, in various modifications, exhibits the same family features of pride, avarice, and ambition.

Miss Howe is an admirably sketched character, drawn in strong contrast to that of Clarissa, yet worthy of being her friend—with more of worldly perspicacity, though less of abstracted principle, and who, when they argue upon points of doubt and de-

licacy, is often able, by going directly to the question at issue, to start the game, while her more gifted correspondent does but beat the bush. Her high spirit and disinterested devotion for her friend, acknowledging, as she does on all occasions, her own inferiority, show her in a noble point of view; and though we are afraid she must have given honest Hickman (notwithstanding her resolutions to the contrary) rather an uneasy time of it after marriage, yet it is impossible not to think that she was a prize worth suffering for.

The publication of *Clarissa* raised the fame of the author to the height. No work had appeared before, perhaps none has appeared since, containing so many direct appeals to the passions, stated too in a manner so irresistible. And high as his reputation stood in his own country, it was even more exalted in those of France and Germany, whose imaginations are more easily excited, and their passions more easily moved by tales of fictitious distress than are the cold-blooded English. Foreigners of distinction have been known to visit Hampstead, and to inquire for the Flask-walk, distinguished as a scene in *Clarissa's* history, just as travellers visit the rocks of Meillerie, to view the localities of Rousseau's tale of passion.

There was never, perhaps, an author who was not encouraged by popular applause again to venture himself before the public; and Richardson, secure,

moreover, in the prepossession of a large party of friends and admirers, was, of course, no exception to the general rule.

The subject of the third and last novel of this eminent author seems to have been in a great degree dictated by the criticism which *Clarissa* had undergone. To his own surprise, as he assured his correspondents, he found that the gaiety, bravery, and occasionally, generosity of *Lovelace*, joined to his courage and ingenuity, had in spite of his crimes, made him find too much grace in the eyes of his fair readers. He had been so studious to prevent this, that when he perceived his rake was rising into an undue and dangerous degree of favour with some of the young ladies of his own school, he threw in some darker shades of character. In this, according to the eulogy of *Johnson*, he was eminently successful; but still *Lovelace* appeared too captivating in the eyes of his fair friends, and even of *Lady Bradshaigh*; so that nothing remained for the author, in point of morality, but to prepare with all speed an antidote to the poison which he had incautiously administered.

With this view, the author tasked his talents to embody the *beau ideal* of a virtuous character, who should have all the title to admiration which he could receive from wit, rank, figure, accomplishment, and fashion, yet compounded inseparably with the still higher qualifications which form the virtu-

ous citizen and the faithful votary of religion. It was with this view that Richardson produced the work originally denominated *The Good Man*, a title which, before publication, he judiciously exchanged for that of *Sir Charles Grandison*.

It must be acknowledged, that although the author exerted his utmost ability to succeed in the task which he had assumed, and, so far as detached parts of the work are considered, has given the same marks of genius which he employed in his former novels, yet this last production has neither the simplicity of the first two volumes of *Pamela*, nor the deep and overwhelming interest of the inimitable *Clarissa*, and must, considering it as a whole, be ranked considerably beneath both these works.

The principal cause of failure may be perhaps traced to Richardson's too strong recollection of the aversion which his friendly critics and correspondents had displayed, to the melancholy scenes in *Clarissa*, in which, darkening and deepening as the story proceeds, his heroine is involved, until the scene is closed by death. He was resolved, perhaps, to give his readers some indemnification, and having formerly shown them virtue in its state of earthly persecution and calamity, now resolved to introduce her, as John Bunyan says, in her golden slippers, and walking abroad in the sunshine. But the author did not sufficiently reflect, that the beacon, upon an exposed head-land, sending forth its saving light



amid the rain and the storm, and burning where all around combines to its extinction; is a far grander and more interesting object to the imagination than the chandelier in a lordly hall, secured by walls and casements from the possibility even of a transient breeze agitating its brilliancy of lustre.

Sir Charles Grandison is a man of large fortune, of rank, and of family, high in the opinion of all who know him, and discharging with the most punctilious accuracy his duties in every relation of life. But, in order to his doing so, he is accommodated with all those exterior advantages which command awe, and attract respect, although entirely adventitious to excellence of principle. He is munificent, but his fortune bears out his generosity; he is affectionate in his domestic relations, but the devoted attachment of his family leaves him no temptation to be otherwise; his temperament is averse from excess, his passions are under the command of his reason; his courage has been so often proved, that he can safely, and without reproach of the world, prefer the dictates of christianity to the rules of modern honour; and, in adventuring himself into danger, he has all the strength and address of Lovelace himself to trust to. Sir Charles encounters no misfortunes, and can hardly be said to undergo any trials. The author, in a word, has sent him forth

——— Victorious,  
Happy, and glorious.

The only dilemma to which he is exposed in the course of the seven volumes, is the doubt which of two beautiful and accomplished women, excellent in disposition, and high in rank, sister excellencies, as it were, both being devotedly attached to him, he shall be pleased to select for his bride; and this with so small a shade of partiality towards either, that we cannot conceive his happiness to be endangered wherever his lot may fall, except by a generous compassion for her whom he must necessarily relinquish. Whatever other difficulties surround him occasionally, vanish before his courage and address; and he is almost secure to make friends, and even converts, of those whose machinations may for a moment annoy him. In a word, Sir Charles Grandison "walks the course" without competition or rivalry.

All this does well enough in a funeral sermon or monumental inscription, where, by privilege of suppressing the worst qualities and exaggerating the better, such images of perfection are sometimes presented. But, in the living world, a state of trial and a valley of tears, such unspotted worth, such unvarying perfection, is not to be met with; and, what is still more important, it could not, if we suppose it to have existence, be attended by all those favours of fortune which are accumulated

upon Richardson's hero ;—and hence the fatal objection of Sir Charles Grandison being the

“ Faultless monster that the world ne'er saw.”

It is not the moral and religious excellence of Sir Charles which the reader is so much disposed to quarrel with, as that, while Richardson designs to give a high moral lesson by the success of his hero, he has failed through resting that success on circumstances which have nothing to do either with morality or religion, but might have been, if indeed they are not, depicted as the properties of Lovelace himself. It is impossible that any very deep lesson can be derived from contemplating a character, at once of unattainable excellence, and which is placed in circumstances of worldly ease and prosperity that render him entirely superior to temptation. Propose the example of Sir Charles Grandison to the sordid spirit, he will answer, I will be generous when I have such an estate—to the unkind brother or the cold friend, I will be affectionate, is the ready answer, when I meet such reciprocity of tenderness. Ask him who fears the reproach of the world, why he gives or accepts a challenge?—I would do neither, he replies, were my reputation for courage established like that of Sir Charles Grandison. The timid may excuse himself for not being bold in the defence of innocence, because he has neither Sir Charles's resolution, nor that inimi-

table command of his sword, which enables that hero to baffle, and, in case of need, to disarm, all who may oppose his interference. Even the libertine will plead difference of temperament and habits, and contend that Sir Charles had all his passions under such complete subjugation, that there was no more danger of his being hurried off by them, than that his six long-tailed horses should run away with his chariot. He does, unquestionably, now and then, in his communications to Dr. Bartlett and others, speak of his naturally passionate temperament as if it were still existing; but we see so little of its effects, or rather it appears, in spite of his own report, so utterly subdued and withered within him, that the only purpose of the confession seems to be, the adding this trait of modesty and humiliation to the more splendid virtues of the hero.

After all, there may, in this reasoning, be much of the perversity of human nature, which is always ready, like Job's tempter, to dispute that worth which has not been proved by adversity. But it was human nature which the author proposed to instruct; and, therefore, to human nature and its feelings he should have adapted his example of piety and morality.

To take the matter less gravely, and consider *Sir Charles Grandison* as a work of amusement, it must be allowed that the interest is destroyed in a great measure by the unceasing ascendancy given to the

fortune as well as the character of the hero. We feel he is too much under the special protection of the author to need any sympathy of ours, and that he has nothing to dread from all the Pollexfens, O'Haras, and so forth, in the world, so long as Richardson is decidedly his friend. Neither are our feelings much interested about him, when his fate is undetermined. He evinces too little passion, and certainly no preference, being clearly ready, with heart and good-will, to marry either Clementina or Harriet Byron, as circumstances may render most proper, and to bow gracefully upon the hand of the rejected lady, and bid her adieu.

Lady Bradshaigh, the frankest of Richardson's correspondents, states this objection to him in full force, and without ceremony:—"You have made me bounce off my chair with reading that two good girls were in love with your hero, and that he was fond of both.—I have such despicable notions of a divided love, that I cannot have an idea how a worthy object can entertain such a thought." The truth is, that Richardson was always arguing for the superiority of duty and principle over feeling, and, not very wisely perhaps, in an abstract view at least, set himself willingly to the task of combating even the sentiment of honest and virtuous love, considered as a passion, although implanted by nature in our breasts for the wisest, as well as kindest purposes, and leading, were it only by carrying our

views and wishes beyond ourselves, to many more good consequences, under the modification of reason, than to evil, numerous as these may be, when it hurries us beyond this. So far did the author carry his contempt and defiance of Cupid, who had, down to his time, been the omnipotent deity of romance, as even to alarm Lady Bradshaigh by some hypothetical arguments in favour of polygamy, a system which goes to exclude individual preferences with a vengeance.

All this must be pardoned to the honest and kind-hearted Richardson, partly for argument's sake, partly because he had very high notions of the rights of the husband, as well as those of the master. It may be some comfort to the ladies to know, as appears from some passages in his correspondence, that, like James the First of England, his despotism consisted more in theory than in practice; and that Mrs. Richardson appears to have had her full share of practical authority and control in whatever related to their quiet family.

Regarding Sir Charles, then, merely as the twenty thousand prize, which was to be drawn by either of the ladies who might be so lucky as to win it, and whose own inclinations scarcely decided him more to the one than to the other, it is clear that the interest must rest—no very flattering thing for the fair sex—upon that predilection which the reader may entertain for the English or for the Italian lady.

And with respect to Miss Byron, amiable as she is represented, and with qualities supposed to approach almost to those of Clarissa, in her happiest state, there attaches a sort of indelicacy, of which we must suppose Clarissa, in similar circumstances, entirely incapable. She literally forms a league in Sir Charles's family, and among his friends, for the purpose of engaging his affections, and is contented to betray the secret of her own love, even when she believes it unreturned—a secret which every delicate mind holds so sacred—not only to old Dr. Bartlett, but to all her own relations, and the Lord knows whom besides, who are all to be edified by the perusal of Sir Charles's letters. Most readers have felt that this conduct on Miss Byron's part, though designed only to elevate the hero, has the contrary effect of degrading the character of the heroine.

The real heroine of the work, and the only one in whose fortunes we take a deep and decided interest, is the unhappy Clementina, whose madness, and indeed her whole conduct, is sketched with the same exquisite pencil which drew the distresses of Clarissa. There are in those passages relating to her, upon which we do not dwell, familiar as they must be to all our readers, scenes which equal any thing that Richardson ever wrote, and which would alone be sufficient to rank him with the highest name in his line of composition. These, with other de-

tached passages in the work, serve to show that there was no diminution in Richardson's powers, but solely the adoption of an inferior plan which renders his two earlier works preferable to *Sir Charles Grandison*.

The structure of *Sir Charles Grandison* being wholly different from that of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, enabled the author entirely to avoid, in his last work, some free and broad descriptions, which were unavoidable while detailing the enterprises of Mr. B—or Lovelace. But though he was freed from all temptation to fall into indelicate warmth of description, a fault which the grosser age of our fathers endured better than ours, Richardson was still unfortunate in assuming the tone of elegance and of high fashion, to which, in his last work, he evidently aspired. Mr. B—is a country squire; the Harlowes, a purse-proud and vulgar race; Lovelace himself a *roué* in point of manners; Lord M—has the manners and sentiments of an old rural gossip; and the vivacity of Miss Howe often approaches to vulgarity. Many models must have been under the observant eye of Richardson, extensive as his acquaintance was through all, excepting the highest circle of fashion, from which he might have drawn such characters, or at least have borrowed their manners and language.

But our author's aspiring to trace the manners of the great, as in *Sir Charles Grandison*, has called



down the censure of an unquestionable judge, and who appears, in his case, disposed to be a severe critic. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, in her inimitable *Letters*, has the following passages:—  
“ His Anna Howe and Charlotte Grandison are recommended as patterns of charming pleasantry, and applauded by his saint-like dames, who mistake folly for wit and humour, and impudence and ill-nature for spirit and fire. Charlotte behaves like a humoursome child, and should have been used like one, and whipped in the presence of her friendly confederate, Harriet.—He (Richardson) has no idea of the manners of high life; his old Lord M—talks in the style of a country justice; and his virtuous young ladies romp like the wenches round a May-pole. Such liberties as pass between Mr. Lovelace and his cousin are not to be excused by the relation. I should have been much astonished if Lord Denbigh should have offered to kiss me; and I dare swear, Lord Trentham never attempted such impertinence to you.”\*

It is no disrespect to Richardson to say, that he could not have had many opportunities of seeing the manners of high life; for society is formed upon principles different entirely from a selection of the best and wisest men; and the author's condition, though far from being low, indigent, or disrespectful, placed him in a humbler and happier rank.

\* Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, vol. iv. p. 182

But there is one sort of good-breeding which is natural and unchangeable, and another, which, consisting of an acquaintance with the evanescent manners and fashions of the day, is merely conventional, and is perpetually changing, like the modes of dress observed in the same circles. The principles of the first are imprinted in every bosom of sense and delicacy. But to be ignorant of the latter, only shows that an author is not very conversant with the society where these fitting rules are observed, or, what may be equally the case, is incapable of tracing their changeful and fading hues. To transgress the rules of natural good-breeding, or to represent characters by whom they should be practised as doing so, is a want of taste which must adhere as a blemish to the work so long as it is read. But crimes against conventional good-breeding run a prescriptive course, and cease to be observed when the rules transgressed have, according to the usual mutability of fashion, been superseded by others. Such errors are like Livy's patavinity, which became imperceptible to latter readers. It was natural that a person of Lady Mary Wortley Montague's taste and rank should be shocked at the want of decorum which she complains of, but at this distance of time we are not sufficiently acquainted with the fashions of George the Second's reign to share her displeasure. We know in general that salutation continued for a long period to be permitted by fashion, as

much as the more lately licensed freedoms of shaking hands and offering the arm: and with this general knowledge it is of little consequence to us, at what particular year of God men of quality were restrained from kissing their cousins, or whether Richardson has made an anachronism in that important matter. The merit of *Lovelace*, considered as a portrait, remains to us the same, notwithstanding that wig, which is now frozen to his head amid his sentimental attendance in the ivy-coppice, and anon skimmed into the fire when he receives the fatal news of *Clarissa's* death. We think as little of dress or fashion as when we gaze on the portraits of *Vandyke*, without asking whether the ruff and the sleeve be or be not precisely of the cut of the period. *Lovelace*, whether exactly corresponding to the minute fashions of his own time or no, continues equally to be what he is described in the nervous language of *Johnson*, in his *Life of Rowe*. "The character of *Lothario* seems to have been expanded by Richardson into that of *Lovelace*; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. *Lothario*, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectators's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone, to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and ele-

gance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain."

Still, however, it is impossible altogether to vindicate Richardson from Lady Mary's charge, or to pronounce him wholly guiltless of trespassing upon the essence of good-breeding, as well as upon its temporary rules and modifications. Lady G—— has as much horse-play in her raillery as Miss Howe, and her lord is a double of Mr. Hickman. Now there ought to have been a difference betwixt the vivacity of a country-bred young lady, trained up under a sufficiently vulgar mother, and that of Miss Grandison, who had always lived in the very first society; and this Lady Mary has a just right to complain of.

There is a fault also attaches to the manners of Sir Charles Grandison himself, though doubtless intended as a model of elegance and courtesy. The very care which the author has taken to deck his manners and conversation with every becoming grace of action and words, has introduced a heavy formality, and a sort of flourishing politeness into his whole person and deportment. His manner, in short, seems too much studied, and his talk too stiffly complimentary, too like a printed book, to use a Scottish phrase, to permit us to associate the ideas of gentleman-like ease and affability, either to the one or the other. We believe this objection has been very generally entertained by the fairer sex,

for whose protection the laws of politeness are introduced, and who must, therefore, be the best judges how far they are complied with.

Notwithstanding these imperfections, and the disadvantage which a new work always sustains at first comparison with its predecessors, Richardson's fame was not diminished by the publication of his *Sir Charles Grandison*, and his fortune would have been increased but for a mercantile fraud, of a nature peculiarly audacious. By some means, which he could not detect, sheet after sheet of the work as it passed the press, was stolen from the author's printing-house, and sent to Dublin, where, availing themselves of the relations between the two countries, as they then stood, some unprincipled booksellers prepared an Irish edition of the book, which they were thus enabled to bring into the market as soon as the author; and, by underselling him, greatly limited his deserved profits. Richardson appears in vain to have sought redress for this injustice by means of his correspondents in Ireland. The union with the sister kingdom has, among other beneficial effects, had that of rendering such frauds impossible in future.

Such is the succinct history of Richardson's productions, and such was its conclusion. It is only necessary to mention, that, besides his three celebrated novels, he completed that collection of *Familiar Letters*, the commencement of which led the

way to *Pamela*—"a work," says Mrs. Barbauld, "usually found in the servant's drawer, but which, when so found, has not unfrequently detained the eye of the mistress, wondering all the while by what secret charm she was induced to turn over a book, apparently too low for her perusal, and that charm was—Richardson." This work, which we have never seen, is said, by the same authority, to illustrate the extreme accuracy with which Richardson had attended to all the duties of life.

Richardson also wrote, in order to assist Dr. Johnson, the ninety-seventh number of the *Rambler*, which the editor ushered in by the following deserved encomium:—"The reader is indebted for this day's entertainment to an author from whom the age has received greater favours, who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue."

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In our detailed remarks on Richardson's several novels, we have, as usual, anticipated much which we otherwise had to say concerning his general merits as an author. It will be to his immortal praise, that he was, perhaps the first author in this line of composition, who, in fictitious narrative, threw aside the trappings of romance, with all its extravagance, and appealed to the awakened pas-

sions of the human heart. The circumstances which led him to descend from the stilts of bombast into the walks of nature, are described in his own account of the origin of *Pamela*, and he quickly discovered that it was not in humble life only that those feelings exist which find sympathy in every reader's bosom; for, if the sympathy with the distresses and the magnanimity of *Clarissa* be not universal, we cannot, we own, envy those who are proof against their charm.

Richardson was well qualified to be the discoverer of a new style of writing, for he was a cautious, deep, and minute examiner of the human heart, and, like Cooke or Parry, left neither head, bay, nor inlet behind him, until he had traced its soundings, and laid it down in his chart, with all its minute sinuosities, its depths, and its shallows. Hence the high, and, comparatively considered, perhaps the undue superiority assigned by Johnson to Richardson over Fielding, against whom he seems to have entertained some prejudice. In one passage he asserts, that "there is more knowledge of the human heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*."\* And, in another, he thus explains the proposition:—"There is all the difference in the world between the characters of nature and characters of manners, and there is this difference between the characters of Fielding and those of Richardson.

\* Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. 1793, vol. ii. p. 30.

Characters of manners are very entertaining; but they are to be understood by a more superficial observer than characters of nature, where a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart.”\* Again, in comparing these two distinguished authors, the critic uses this illustration—“that there was as great a difference between them, as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking at the dial-plate.”† Dissenting as we do from the conclusions to be deduced from Dr. Johnson’s simile, we would rather so modify it as to describe both authors as excellent mechanics; the time-pieces of Richardson showing a great deal of the internal work by which the index is regulated; while those of Fielding merely pointed to the hour of the day, being all that most men desire to know. Or, to take a more manageable comparison, the analogy between the writings of Fielding and Richardson resembles that which free, bold, and true sketches bear to paintings which have been very minutely laboured, and, amid their excellence, still exhibit some of the heaviness which almost always attends the highest degree of finishing. This, indeed, is admitted by Johnson himself, in his reply to the observation of the Honourable Thomas Erskine, that Richardson was

\* Boswell’s Life of Johnson, ed. 1793, vol. i. p. 508.

† Ibid.



tedious.—“Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted, that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story only as giving occasion to the sentiment.” Were we to translate the controversy into plain language, it might be summed up in pronouncing the works of Richardson the more instructive, those of Fielding the more amusing, and that a reader might select the one or the other for his studies, according to Tony Lumpkin’s phrase, as he felt himself “in a concatenation accordingly.”

It is impossible to tell whether Richardson’s peculiar and circumstantial mode of narrative arose entirely out of the mode in which he evolves his story, by the letters of the actors, or whether his early partiality for letter-writing was not rather founded upon his innate love of detail. But these talents and propensities must have borne upon and fortified each other. To the letter-writer every event is recent, and is painted immediately while under the eye, with reference to its relative importance to what has past and what is to come. All is, so to speak, painted in the fore-ground, and nothing in the distance. A game at whist, if the subject of a letter, must be detailed as much at length, as a debate in the House of Commons, upon a subject of great national interest; and hence, perhaps, that tendency to prolixity, of which the readers of Richardson frequently complain.

There is this additional disadvantage, tending to the same disagreeable impression, that incidents are, in many instances, detailed again and again by the various actors, to their different correspondents. If this has the advantage of placing the characters, each in their own peculiar light, and contrasting their thoughts, plans, and sentiments, it is at least partly balanced, by arresting the progress of the story, which stands still while the characters show all their paces, like horses in the manege, without advancing a yard. But then it gives the reader, as Mrs. Barbauld well remarks, the advantage of being thoroughly acquainted with those in whose fate he is to be interested. "In consequence of this," adds that accomplished lady, "our feelings are not transient, elicited here and there by a pathetic stroke, but we regard his characters as real personages, whom we know and converse with, and whose fate remains to be decided in the course of events."\* The minute style of Richardson is accordingly attended with this peculiar advantage, that as strong a light as can be necessary is thrown on every personage who advances on the scene, and that we have as distinct an idea of the individual and peculiar character of every female in Mrs. Sinclair's family, whom it is necessary to name; of the greedy and hypocritical Joseph Leman; of the plausible Captain Singleton, and of Lovelace's other agents, as

\* Life of Richardson, vol. i. p. 82.

we have of Lovelace himself. The character of Colonel Morden, for example, although we see so little of him, is quite individual. He is high-spirited, bold, and skilful at his weapon ; a man of the world and a man of honour ; neither violent enough to precipitate his revenge, nor forbearing enough to avoid grasping it when the fitting opportunity offers. The awe in which he is held by the Harlowes, even before his appearance ; the respect which Clarissa entertains for him as a natural protector, prepares us for his approach as he enters on the scene, like the avenger of blood, too late, indeed, to save Clarissa, but a worthy vindicator of her wrongs, and a no less worthy conqueror of Lovelace. Whatever piety and forbearance there is in his cousin's last charge to such a man as Colonel Morden, we cannot for a moment be either surprised or sorry that it is disobeyed.

It must not be overlooked, that, by the circumstantial detail of minute, trivial, and even uninteresting circumstances, the author gives to his fiction an air of reality that can scarcely otherwise be obtained. In every real narrative, he who tells it, dwells upon slight and inconsiderable circumstances, no otherwise interesting than because they are associated in his mind with the more important events which he desires to communicate. De Foe, who understood, and availed himself on all occasions of this mode of garnishing an imaginary history, with

all the minute accompaniments which distinguish a true one, was scarce a greater master of this peculiar art, than was our author Richardson.

Still, with all these advantages, which so peculiarly adapted the mode of carrying on the story by epistolary correspondence to Richardson's peculiar genius, it has its corresponding defects. In order that all may be written which must be known for the purpose of the narrative, the characters must frequently write, when it would be more natural for them to be acting—must frequently write what it is not natural to write at all—and must at all times write a great deal oftener, and a great deal more than one would now think life has time for. But these arguments did not probably weigh much with Richardson, an inveterate letter-writer from his youth upwards, and certainly as indefatigable (we had almost said formidable) a correspondent as any of the characters he has drawn.

Richardson was himself aware of the luxuriance of his imagination, and that he was sometimes apt to exceed the patience of the reader. He indulged his own vein, by writing without any fixed plan, and at great length, which he afterwards curtailed and compressed; so that, strange as it may seem, his compositions were reduced almost one-half in point of size before they were committed to the press. In his first two novels also, he showed much attention to the plot, and though diffuse and prolix

in narration, can never be said to be rambling or desultory. No characters are introduced but for the purpose of advancing the plot; and there are but few of those digressive dialogues and dissertations with which *Sir Charles Grandison* abounds. The story keeps the direct road, though it moves slowly. But in his last work the author is much more excursive. There is indeed little in the plot to require attention; the various events, which are successively narrated, being no otherwise connected together, than as they place the character of the hero in some new and peculiar point of view. The same may be said of the numerous and long conversations upon religious and moral topics, which compose so great a part of the work, that a venerable old lady, whom we well knew, when in advanced age she became subject to drosy fits, chose to hear *Sir Charles Grandison* read to her as she sat in her elbow-chair, in preference to any other work, "because," said she, "should I drop asleep in course of the reading, I am sure, when I awake, I shall have lost none of the story, but shall find the party, where I left them, *conversing in the cedar-parlour*." It is probable, after all, that the prolixity of Richardson, which, to our giddy-paced times, is the greatest fault of his writing, was not such an objection to his contemporaries. Those who with patience had studied rant and bombast in the folios of Scuderi, could not readily tire of nature, sense, and genius,

in the octavos of Richardson. But a modern reader may be permitted to wish that *Clarissa* had been a good deal abridged at the beginning, and *Sir Charles Grandison* at the end; that the last two volumes of *Pamela* had been absolutely cancelled, and the second much compressed. And, upon the whole, it might be desired, that many of those trivial details of dresses and decorations, which relish, to say truth, of the mantua-maker's shops in which Richardson made his first efforts at composition, were altogether abolished, especially where they are put into the letters of sensible persons, or impertinently thrust upon us during the currency of a scene of passion. It requires the recollection of Richardson's highest powers to maintain our respect for him, when he makes Lovelace, amidst all his triumph at *Clarissa's* elopement, describe her dress to Belford, from top to toe, with all the professional accuracy of a man-milliner. But it is ungracious to dwell on defects redeemed by so many excellencies.

The style of Richardson was of that pliable and facile kind, which could, with slight variety, be adapted to what best befitted his various personages. When he wrote in his higher characters, it was copious, expressive, and appropriate; but, through the imperfection of his education, not always strictly elegant, or even accurate. During his life, the common cant, as usual, was, that he received as

sistance, which, as a practical admission of personal incompetence to the task they have undertaken, we believe few men of reputed talent would stoop to accept of. It is now known that he wrote his whole works without any such aid, excepting the *Ode to Wisdom*, by Mrs. Carter, or a number of Latin quotations, furnished by a learned friend to bedizen the epistle of Elias Brand.

The power of Richardson's painting in his deeper scenes of tragedy, never has been, and probably never will, be excelled. Those of distressed innocence, as in the history of Clarissa and Clementina, rend the very heart; and few, jealous of manly equanimity, should read them for the first time in the presence of others. In others, where the same heroines, and particularly Clarissa, display a noble elevation of soul, rising above earthly considerations and earthly oppression, the reader is perhaps as much elevated towards a pure sympathy with virtue and religion, as uninspired composition can raise him. His scenes of unmingled horror, as the deaths of Belton, and of the infamous Sinclair, are as dreadful as the former are elevating; and they are directed to the same noble purpose, increasing our fear and hatred of vice, as the former are qualified to augment our love and veneration of virtue. The lighter qualities of the novelist were less proper to this distinguished author than those which are allied to tragedy. Yet, not even in these was

Richardson deficient ; and his sketches of this kind display the same accurate knowledge of humanity manifested in his higher efforts. His comedy is not overstrained, and never steps beyond the bounds of nature, and he never sacrifices truth and probability to brilliancy of effect. Without what is properly termed wit, the author possessed liveliness and gaiety sufficient to colour those scenes ; and though he is never, like his rival Fielding, irresistibly ludicrous, nor indeed, ever essays to be so, there is a fund of quaint drollery pervades his lighter sketches, which renders them very agreeable to the reader.

The change of taste and of fashion may, perhaps, from the causes we have freely stated, have thrown a temporary shade over Richardson's popularity. Or, perhaps he may, in the present generation, be only paying, by comparative neglect, the price of the very high reputation which he enjoyed during his own age. For if immortality, or any thing approaching to it, is granted to authors and their works, it seems only to be on the conditions assigned to that of Nourjahad, in the beautiful Eastern tale, that they shall be liable to occasional intervals of slumber and comparative oblivion. Yet, under all these disadvantages, the genius of Richardson must be ever acknowledged to have done honour to the language in which he wrote, and his manly and virtuous application of his talents to the service of morality, and to human nature in general.



## JOHNSON.

OF all the men distinguished in this or any other age, Dr. Johnson has left upon posterity the strongest and most vivid impression, so far as person, manners, disposition, and conversation are concerned. We do but name him, or open a book which he has written, and the sound and action recall to the imagination at once, his form, his merits, his peculiarities, nay, the very uncouthness of his gestures, and the deep impressive tone of his voice. We learn not only what he said, but how he said it; and have at the same time, a shrewd guess of the secret motive why he did so, and whether he spoke in sport or in anger, in the desire of conviction, or for the love of debate. It was said of a noted wag, that his *bon-mots* did not give full satisfaction when published, because he could not print his face. But with respect to Dr. Johnson, this has been in some degree accomplished; and although the greater part of the present generation never saw him, yet he is, in our mind's eye, a personification as lively as that of Siddons in *Lady Macbeth*, or Kemble in *Cardinal Wolsey*.

All this, as the world well knows, arises from Johnson having found in James Boswell such a biographer, as no man but himself ever had, or ever

deserved to have. The performance which chiefly resembles it in structure, is the life of the philosopher Demophon, in Lucian; but that slight sketch is far inferior in detail and in vivacity to Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, which, considering the eminent persons to whom it relates, the quantity of miscellaneous information and entertaining gossip which it brings together, may be termed, without exception, the best parlour window book that ever was written. Accordingly, such has been the reputation which it has enjoyed, that it renders useless even the form of an abridgment, which is the less necessary as the great Lexicographer only stands connected with the department of fictitious narrative by the brief tale of *Rasselas*.

A few dates and facts may be briefly recalled, for the sake of uniformity of plan, after which we will venture to offer a few remarks upon *Rasselas*, and the character of its great author.

Samuel Johnson was born and educated in Litchfield, where his father was a country bookseller of some eminence, since he belonged to its magistracy. He was born September 18th, 1709. His school days were spent in his native city, and his education completed at Pembroke College, Oxford. Of gigantic strength of body, and mighty powers of mind, he was afflicted with that nameless disease on the spirits, which often rendered the latter useless; and externally deformed by a scrofulous complaint, the scars

of which disfigured his otherwise strong and sensible countenance. The indigence of his parents compelled him to leave college upon his father's death in 1731, when he gathered in a succession of eleven pounds sterling. In poverty, however, his learning and his probity secured him respect. He was received in the best society of his native place. His first literary attempt, the translation of *Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia*, appeared during this period, and probably led him, at a later period, to lay in that remote kingdom the scene of his philosophical tale, of *Rasselas*. About the same time, he married a wife considerably older than himself, and attempted to set up a school in the neighbourhood of Litchfield. The project proved unsuccessful; and in 1737, he set out to try to mend his fortunes in London, attended by David Garrick. Johnson had with him in manuscript his tragedy of *Irene*, and meant to commence dramatic author; Garrick was to be bred to the law. Fate had different designs for both.

There is little doubt, that upon his outset in London, Johnson felt in full force the ills which assail the unprotected scholar, whose parts are yet unknown to the public, and who must write at once for bread and for distinction. His splendid imitation of Juvenal, *London*, a satire, was the first of his works which drew the attention of the public, yet, neither its celebrity, nor that of its more brilliant successor,

the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, the deep and pathetic morality of which has often extracted tears from those whose eyes wander dry over pages professedly sentimental, could save the poet from the irksome drudgery of a writer of all work. His *Irene*, also, was unfortunate upon the stage, and his valuable hours were consumed in obscure labour. He was fortunate, however, in a strong and virtuous power of thinking, which prevented his plunging into those excesses, in which neglected genius, in catching at momentary gratification, is so apt to lose character and respectability. While his friend Savage was wasting considerable powers in temporary gratification, Johnson was advancing slowly but surely into a higher class of society. The powers of his pen were supported by those of his conversation; he lost no friend by misconduct, and each new friend whom he made became his admirer.

The booksellers, also, were sensible of his value as a literary labourer, and employed him in that laborious and gigantic task, a dictionary of the language. How it is executed is well-known, and sufficiently surprising, considering that the learned author was a stranger to the northern languages, on which English is radically grounded, and that the discoveries in grammar since made by Horne Tooke, were then unknown. In the meantime, the publication of the *Rambler*, though not very successful during its progress, stamped the character of the

author as one of the first moral writers of the age, and as eminently qualified to write, and even to improve, the English language.

In 1752, Johnson was deprived of his wife, a loss which he appears to have felt most deeply. After her death, society, the best of which was now open to a man who brought such stores to increase its pleasures, seems to have been his principal enjoyment, and his great resource when assailed by that malady of mind which embittered his solitary moments.

The *Idler*, scarce so popular as the *Rambler*, followed in 1758. In 1759, *Rasselas* was hastily composed, in order to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral, and some small debts which she had contracted. This beautiful tale was composed in one week, and sent in portions to the printer. Johnson told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he never afterwards read it over. The publishers paid the author a hundred pounds, with twenty-four more, when the work came to a second edition.

The mode in which *Rasselas* was composed, and the purposes for which it was written, show that the author's situation was still embarrassed. But his circumstances became more easy in 1762, when a pension of 300*l.* placed him beyond the drudgery of labouring for mere subsistence. It was distinctly explained, that this grant was made on public grounds alone, and intended as homage to Johnson's ser-

vices for literature. But two political pamphlets, *The False Alarm*, and that upon the *Falkland Islands*, afterwards showed that the author was grateful.

In 1765, pushed forward by the satire of Curchill, Johnson published his subscription Shakspeare, for which proposals had been long in circulation.

The author's celebrated *Journey to the Hebrides* was published in 1775. Whatever might be his prejudices against Scotland, its natives must concede, that many of his remarks concerning the poverty and barrenness of the country, tended to produce those subsequent exertions, which have done much to remedy the causes of reproach. The Scots were angry because Johnson was not enraptured with their scenery, which, from a defect of bodily organs, he could neither see nor appreciate; and they seem to have set rather too high a rate on the hospitality paid to a stranger, when they contended it should shut the mouth of a literary traveller upon all subjects but those of panegyric. Dr. Johnson took a better way of repaying the civilities he received, by exercising kindness and hospitality in London to all such friends as he had received attention from in Scotland.

His pamphlet, entitled *Taxation no Tyranny*, which drew upon him much wrath from those who supported the American cause, is written in a strain of high toryism, and tended to promote an event

pregnant with much good and evil, the separation of the mother country from the American colonies.

In 1777, he was engaged in one of his most pleasing as well as most popular works, *The Lives of the British Poets*, which he executed with a degree of critical force and talent which has seldom been concentrated.

Johnson's laborious and distinguished career terminated in 1783, when virtue was deprived of a steady supporter, society of a brilliant ornament, and literature of a successful cultivator. The latter part of his life was honoured with general applause, for none was more fortunate in obtaining and preserving the friendship of the wise and the worthy. Thus loved and venerated, Johnson might have been pronounced happy. But heaven, in whose eyes strength is weakness, permitted his faculties to be clouded occasionally with that morbid affection of the spirits, which disgraced his talents by prejudices, and his manners by rudeness.

When we consider the rank which Dr. Johnson held, not only in literature, but in society, we cannot help figuring him to ourselves as the benevolent giant of some fairy tale, whose kindnesses and courtesies are still mingled with a part of the rugged ferocity imputed to the fabulous sons of Anak, or rather, perhaps, like a Roman dictator, fetched from his farm, whose wisdom and heroism still relished of his rustic occupation. And there were times

when, with all his wisdom, and all his wit, this rudeness of disposition, and the sacrifices and submissions which he unsparingly exacted, were so great, that even Mrs. Thrale seems at length to have thought that the honour of being Johnson's hostess was almost counterbalanced by the tax which he exacted on her time and patience.

The cause of those deficiencies in temper and manners, was no ignorance of what was fit to be done in society, or how far each individual ought to suppress his own wishes in favour of those with whom he associates ; for, theoretically, no man understood the rules of good breeding better than Dr. Johnson, or could act more exactly in conformity with them, when the high rank of those with whom he was in company for the time required that he should do so. But during the greater part of his life, he had been in a great measure a stranger to the higher society, in which such restraint became necessary ; and it may be fairly presumed, that the indulgence of a variety of little selfish peculiarities, which it is the object of good breeding to suppress, became thus familiar to him. The consciousness of his own mental superiority in most companies which he frequented, contributed to his dogmatism ; and when he had attained his eminence as a dictator in literature, like other potentates, he was not averse to a display of his authority : resembling, in this particular, Swift, and one or two other men of



genius, who have had the bad taste to imagine that their talents elevated them above observance of the common rules of society. It must be also remarked, that in Johnson's time, the literary society of London was much more confined than at present, and that he sat the Jupiter of a little circle, prompt, on the slightest contradiction, to launch the thunders of rebuke and sarcasm. He was, in a word, despotic, and despotism will occasionally lead the best dispositions into unbecoming abuse of power. It is not likely that any one will again enjoy, or have an opportunity of abusing, the singular degree of submission which was rendered to Johnson by all around him. The unreserved communications of friends, rather than the spleen of enemies, have occasioned his character being exposed in all its shadows, as well as its lights. But those, when summed and counted, amount only to a few narrow minded prejudices concerning country and party, from which few ardent tempers remain entirely free, and some violences and solecisms in manners, which left his talents, morals, and benevolence, alike unimpeachable.

Of *Rasselas*, translated into so many languages, and so widely circulated through the literary world, the merits have been long justly appreciated. It was composed in solitude and sorrow; and the melancholy cast of feeling which it exhibits sufficiently evinces the temper of the author's mind. The resemblance, in some respects, betwixt the tenor of

the moral and that of *Candide*, is so striking, that Johnson himself admitted, that if the authors could possibly have seen each other's manuscript, they could not have escaped the charge of plagiarism. But they resemble each other like a wholesome and a poisonous fruit. The object of the witty Frenchman, is to lead to a distrust of the wisdom of the Great Governor of the Universe, by presuming to arraign him of incapacity before the creatures of his will. Johnson uses arguments drawn from the same premises, with the benevolent view of encouraging men to look to another and a better world, for the satisfaction of wishes which, in this, seem only to be awakened in order to be disappointed. The one is a fiend—a merry devil, we grant—who scoffs at and derides human miseries; the other, a friendly though grave philosopher, who shows us the nothingness of earthly hopes, to teach us that our affections ought to be placed elsewhere.

The work can scarce be termed a narrative, being in a great measure void of incident; it is rather a set of moral dialogues on the various vicissitudes of human life, its follies, its fears, its hopes, and its wishes, and the disappointment in which all terminate. The style is in Johnson's best manner; enriched and rendered sonorous by the triads and quaternions which he so much loved, and balanced with an art which perhaps he derived from the learned Sir Thomas Brown. The reader may sometimes

complain, with Boswell, that the unalleviated picture of human helplessness and misery leaves sadness upon the mind after perusal. But the moral is to be found in the conclusion of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, a poem which treats of the same melancholy subject, and closes with this sublime strain of morality :—

Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,  
Obedient passions, and a will resign'd ;  
For Love, which scarce collective man can fill ;  
For Patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill ;  
For Faith, that, panting for a happier seat,  
Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat :  
These goods, for man, the laws of Heaven ordain :  
These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain :  
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,  
And makes the happiness she cannot find.

## GOLDSMITH.

THE circumstances of Dr. Goldsmith's life, his early struggles with poverty and distress, the success of his brief and brilliant career after he had become distinguished as an author, are so well known, and have been so well told, that a short outline is all that need be attempted.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH was born on the 29th November, 1728, at Pallas (or rather Palice), in the parish of Farney, and county of Longford, in Ireland, where his father, the Reverend Charles Goldsmith, a minister of the church of England, at that time resided. This worthy clergyman, whose virtues his celebrated son afterwards rendered immortal, in the character of the Village Preacher, had a family of seven children, for whom he was enabled to provide but very indifferently. He obtained ultimately a benefice in the county of Roscommon, but died early; for the careful researches of the Rev. John Graham of Lifford have found his widow *nigra veste senescens*, residing with her son Oliver in Ballymahon, so early as 1740. Among the shop accounts of a petty grocer of the place, Mrs. Goldsmith's name occurs frequently as

a customer for trifling articles ; on which occasions Master Noll appears to have been his mother's usual emissary. He was recollected, however, in the neighbourhood, by more poetical employments, as that of playing on the flute, and wandering in solitude on the shores, or among the islands of the river Inny, which is remarkably beautiful at Ballymahon.

Oliver early distinguished himself by the display of lively talents, and of that uncertainty of humour which is so often attached to genius, as the slave in the chariot of the Roman triumph. An uncle by affinity, the Rev. Thomas Contarine, undertook the expense of affording to so promising a youth the advantages of a scholastic education. He was put to school at Edgeworth's Town, and, in June 1744, was sent to Dublin College as a sizer ; a situation which subjected him to much discouragement and ill usage, especially as he had the misfortune to fall under the charge of a brutal tutor.

On the 15th June, 1747, Goldsmith obtained his only academical laurel, being an exhibition on the foundation of Erasmus Smythe, esq. Some indiscreet frolic induced him soon afterwards to quit the university for a period ; and he appears thus early to have commenced that sort of idle strolling life, which has often great charms for youths of genius, because it frees them from every species of subjection, and leaves them full masters of their own time,

and their own thoughts; a liberty which they do not feel too dearly bought at the expense of fatigue, of hunger, and of all the other inconveniences incidental to those who travel without money. Those who can recollect journeys of this kind, with all the shifts, necessities, and petty adventures which attend them, will not wonder at the attractions which they had for such a youth as Goldsmith. Notwithstanding these erratic expeditions, he was admitted bachelor of arts in 1749.

Goldsmith's persevering friend, Mr. Contarine, seems to have recommended the direction of his nephew's studies to medicine, and, in the year 1752, he was settled at Edinburgh to pursue that science. Of his residence in Scotland, Goldsmith retained no favourable recollections. He was thoughtless, and he was cheated; he was poor, and he was nearly starved. Yet, in a very lively letter from Edinburgh, addressed to Robert Bricanton of Ballymahon, he closes a sarcastic description of the country and its inhabitants, with the good-humoured candour which made so distinguished a part of his character. "An ugly and a poor man is society only for himself, and such society the world lets me enjoy in great abundance. Fortune has given you circumstances, and nature a power to look charming in the eyes of the fair. Nor do I envy, my dear Bob, such blessings, while I may sit down and laugh at the

world and at myself, the most ridiculous object in it."

From Edinburgh our student passed to Leyden, but not without the diversities of an arrest for debt, a captivity of seven days at Newcastle, from having been found in company with some Scotchmen in the French service, and the no less unpleasing variety of a storm. At Leyden, Goldsmith was peculiarly exposed to a temptation which he never, at any period of his life, could easily resist. The opportunities of gambling were frequent—he seldom declined them, and was at length stripped of every shilling.

In this hopeless condition, Goldsmith commenced his travels, with one shirt in his pocket, and a devout reliance on Providence. It is understood, that, in the narrative of George, eldest son of the Vicar of Wakefield, the author gave a sketch of the resources which enabled him, on foot and without money, to make the tour of Europe. Through Germany and Flanders, he had recourse to his violin, in which he was tolerably skilled; and a lively tune usually procured him a lodging in some peasant's cottage for the evening. In Italy, where his music or skill was held in less esteem, he found hospitality by disputing at the monasteries, in the character of a travelling scholar, upon certain philosophical theses, which the learned inhabitants were obliged, by their foundation, to uphold against all impugners.

Thus, he obtained sometimes money, sometimes lodgings. He must have had other resources to procure both, which he has not thought proper to intimate. The foreign universities afford similar facilities to poor scholars, with those presented by the monasteries. Goldsmith resided at Padua for several months, and is said to have taken a degree at Louvain. Thus far is certain, that an account of the tour made by so good a judge of human nature, in circumstances so singular, would have made one of the most entertaining books in the world ; and it is both wonder and pity, that Goldsmith did not hit upon a publication of his travels amongst the other literary resources in which his mind was fertile. He was not ignorant of the advantages which his mode of travelling had opened to him. "Countries," he says in his *Essay on Polite Literature in Europe*, "wear very different appearances to travellers of different circumstances. A man who is whirled through Europe in his post-chaise, and the pilgrim who walks the great tour on foot, will form very different conclusions. *Haud inexpertus loquor.*" Perhaps he grew ashamed of the last admission, which he afterwards omitted. Goldsmith spent about twelve months in these wanderings, and landed in England in the year 1746, after having perambulated France, Italy, and part of Germany.

Poverty was now before our author in all its bitterness. His Irish friends had long renounced ex-



forgotten him ; and the wretched post of usher to an academy, of which he has drawn so piteous a picture in George's account of himself, was his refuge from actual starving. Unquestionably his description was founded on personal recollections, where he says :—" I was up early and late ; I was brow-beat by the master ; hated for my ugly face by the mistress ; worried by the boys within ; and never permitted to stir out, to seek civility abroad." This state of slavery he underwent at Peckham academy, and had such bitter recollection thereof as to be offended at the slightest allusion to it. An acquaintance happening to use the proverbial phrase, " Oh, that is all a holyday at Peckham," Goldsmith reddened, and asked if he meant to affront him. From this miserable condition he escaped, with difficulty, to that of journeyman, or rather shop-porter, to a chemist in Fish-street hill, in whose service he was recognized by Dr. Sleigh, his countryman and fellow-student at Edinburgh, who, to his eternal honour, relieved Oliver Goldsmith from this state of slavish degradation.

Under the auspices of his friend and countryman, Goldsmith commenced practice as a physician about the Bankside, and afterwards near the Temple ; and, although unsuccessful in procuring fees, had soon plenty of patients. It was now that he first thought of having recourse to that pen which afterwards afforded the public so much delight. He

wrote, he laboured, he compiled ; he is described by one contemporary as wearing a rusty full trimmed black suit, the very livery of the Muses, with his pockets stuffed with papers, and his head with projects ; gradually he forced himself and his talents into notice, and was at last enabled to write, in one letter to a friend, that he was too poor to be gazed at, but too rich to need assistance ;\* and to boast in another,† of the refined conversation which he was sometimes admitted to partake in.

He now circulated proposals for publishing, by subscription, his *Essay on Polite Literature in Europe*, the profits of which he destined to equipping himself for India, having obtained from the Company the appointment of physician to one of their factories on the coast of Coromandel. But to rise in literature was more his desire than to increase his fortune. "I eagerly long," he said, "to embrace every opportunity to separate myself from the vulgar, as much in my circumstances as I am already in my sentiments.—I find I want constitution and a strong steady disposition, which alone makes men great. I will, however, correct my faults, since I am conscious of them."‡

Goldsmith's versatile talents and ready pen soon

\* Letter to Daniel Hodson, Esq. See Life of Goldsmith, prefixed to his works, in 4 vols. 1801, vol. i. p. 42.

† Idem, p. 48.

‡ Idem, pp. 48, 49.

engaged him in the service of the booksellers ; and, doubtless, the touches of his spirit and humour were used to enliven the dull pages of many a sorry miscellany and review ; a mode of living which, joined to his own improvidence, rendered his income as fluctuating as his occupation. He wrote many essays for various periodical publications, and afterwards collected them into one volume, finding that they were unceremoniously appropriated by his contemporaries. In the preface, he compares himself to the fat man in a famine, who, when his fellow sufferers proposed to feast on the superfluous part of his person, insisted, with some justice, on having the first slice himself. But his most elaborate effort in this style is the *Citizen of the World* ; letters supposed to be written by a Chinese philosopher, resident in England, in imitation of the *Lettres Persannes* of Montesquieu. Still, however, though subsisting thus precariously, he was getting forward in society ; and had already, in the year 1761, made his way as far as Dr. Johnson, who seems, from their first acquaintance, till death separated them ; to have entertained for Goldsmith the most sincere friendship, regarding his genius with respect, his failings with indulgence, and his person with affection.

It was probably soon after this first acquaintance, that necessity, the parent of so many works of genius, gave birth to the *Vicar of Wakefield*. The

circumstances attending the sale of the work to the fortunate publisher, are too singular to be told in any other words than those of Johnson, as reported by his faithful chronicler, Boswell.

“ I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith, that he was in great distress ; and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit ; told the landlady I should soon return, and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.”

Newberry, the purchaser of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, best known to the present generation by recollection of their infantine studies, was a man of worth as well as wealth, and the frequent patron of distressed genius. When he completed the bargain,

which he probably entered into partly from compassion, partly from deference to Johnson's judgment, he had so little confidence in the value of his purchase, that the *Vicar of Wakefield* remained in manuscript until the publication of the *Traveller* had established the fame of the author.

For this beautiful poem Goldsmith had collected materials during his travels; and a part of it had been actually written in Switzerland, and transmitted from that country to the author's brother, the Rev. Dr. Henry Goldsmith. His distinguished friend, Dr. Johnson, aided him with several general hints; and is said to have contributed the sentiment which Goldsmith has so beautifully versified in the concluding lines.

The publication of the *Traveller* gave the author all that celebrity which he had so long laboured to attain. He now assumed the professional dress of the medical science, a scarlet cloak, wig, sword, and cane, and was admitted as a valued member of that distinguished society, which afterwards formed the Literary, or as it is more commonly called, emphatically, *The Club*. For this he made some sacrifices, renouncing some of the public places which he had formerly found convenient in point of expense and amusement; not without regret, for he used to say, "in truth, one must make some sacrifices to obtain good society; for here am I shut out of several places where I used to play the fool very agreeably."

It often happened amid those sharper wits with whom he now associated, that the simplicity of his character, mingled with an inaccuracy of expression, an undistinguishing spirit of vanity, and a hurriedness of conception, which led him often into absurdity, rendered Dr. Goldsmith in some degree the butt of the company. Garrick, in particular, who probably presumed somewhat on the superiority of a theatrical manager over a dramatic author, shot at him many shafts of small epigrammatic wit. It is probable that Goldsmith began to feel that this spirit was carried too far, and to check it in the best taste, he composed his celebrated poem of *Retaliation*, in which the characters and failings of his associates are drawn with satire at once pungent and good-humoured. Garrick is smartly chastised; Burke, the dinner bell of the House of Commons, is not spared; and of all the more distinguished names of the Club, Johnson and Reynolds alone escape the lash of the satirist. The latter is even dismissed with unqualified and affectionate applause. *Retaliation* had the effect of placing the author on a more equal footing with his society than he had ever before assumed. Even against the despotism of Johnson, though much respecting him, and as much beloved by him, Goldsmith made a more spirited stand than was generally ventured upon by the compeers of that arbitrary Sultan of Literature. Of this Boswell has recorded a striking instance. Goldsmith had been

descanting on the difficulty and importance of making animals in an apologue speak in character, and particularly instanced the fable of the Little Fishes. Observing that Dr. Johnson was laughing scornfully, he proceeded smartly; "why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think, for if *you* were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales."

To support the expense of his new dignities, Goldsmith laboured incessantly at the literary oar. The *Letters on the History of England*, commonly ascribed to Lord Lyttleton, and containing an excellent and entertaining abridgment of the Annals of Britain, are the work of Goldsmith. His mode of compiling them we learn from some interesting anecdotes of the author, communicated to the public by Lee Lewes, an actor of genius, whom he patronized, and with whom he often associated.

"He first read in a morning, from Hume, Rapin, and sometimes Kennet, as much as he designed for one letter, marking down the passages referred to on a sheet of paper, with remarks. He then rode or walked out with a friend or two, whom he constantly had with him; returned to dinner, spent the day generally convivially, without much drinking (which he was never in the habit of), and when he went up to bed, took up his books and paper with him, where he generally wrote the chapter, or the best part of it, before he went to rest. This latter

exercise cost him very little trouble, he said ; for having all his materials ready for him, he wrote it with as much facility as a common letter.

“ But of all his compilations, he used to say, his *Selections of English Poetry* showed more ‘ the art of profession.’ Here he did nothing but mark the particular passages with a red lead pencil, and for this he got *two hundred pounds*—but then he used to add, ‘ a man shows his judgment in these selections, and he may be often twenty years of his life cultivating that judgment.’ ”

Goldsmith, amid these more petty labours, aspired to the honours of the sock, and the *Good-Natured Man* was produced at Covent Garden, 29th January, 1768, with the moderate success of nine nights’ run. The principal character the author probably drew from the weak side of his own ; for no man was more liable than Goldsmith to be gulled by pretended friends. The character of Croaker, highly comic in itself, and admirably represented by Shuter, helped to save the piece, which was endangered by the scene of the bailiffs, then considered as too vulgar for the stage. Upon the whole, however, Goldsmith is said to have cleared five hundred pounds by this dramatic performance. He hired better chambers in the Temple, embarked more boldly in literary speculation, and unfortunately at the same time enlarged his ideas of expense, and indulged his habit of playing at games of hazard.



The Memoirs, or Anecdotes, which we have before quoted, give a minute and curious description of his habits and enjoyments about this period, when he was constantly occupied with extracts, abridgments, and other arts of book-making, but at the same time working slowly, and in secret, on those immortal verses, which secure for him so high a rank among English poets.

“ Goldsmith, though quick enough at prose, was rather slow in his poetry—not from the tardiness of fancy, but the time he took in pointing the sentiment, and polishing the versification. He was, by his own confession, four or five years collecting materials in all his country excursions for this poem, and was actually engaged in the construction of it above two years. His manner of writing poetry was this ; he first sketched a part of his design in prose, in which he threw out his ideas as they occurred to him ; he then sat carefully down to versify them, correct them, and add such other ideas as he thought better fitted to the subject. He sometimes would exceed his prose design by writing several verses impromptu, but these he would take uncommon pains afterwards to revise, lest they should be found unconnected with his main design.

“ The writer of these Memoirs (Lee Lewes) called upon the Doctor the second morning after he had begun *The Deserted Village*, and to him he communicated the plan of his poem. ‘ Some of my

friends,' continued he, 'differ with me on this plan, and think this depopulation of villages does not exist—but I am myself satisfied of the fact. I remember it in my own country, and have seen it in this. He then read what he had done of it that morning, beginning:—

"Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
 Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
 How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,  
 Where humble happiness endear'd each scene?  
 How often have I paused on every charm—  
 The shelter'd cot—the cultivated farm—  
 The never-failing brook—the busy mill—  
 The decent church, that tops the neighbouring hill—  
 The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
 For talking age and whispering lovers made!

" 'Come,' says he, 'let me tell you this is no bad morning's work; and now, my dear boy, if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy a *Shoemaker's Holiday* with you.' This *Shoemaker's Holiday* was a day of great festivity to poor Goldsmith, and was spent in the following innocent manner:—

"Three or four of his intimate friends rendezvoused at his chambers, to breakfast, about ten o'clock in the morning; at eleven they proceeded by the City Road, and through the fields to Highbury Barn, to dinner; about six o'clock in the evening they adjourned to White Conduit House, to drink tea; and concluded the evening by supping

at the Grecian, or Temple Exchange Coffee-houses or at the Globe, in Fleet-street. There was a very good ordinary of two dishes and pastry kept at Highbury Barn about this time (five and twenty years ago, in 1796), at ten-pence per head, including a penny to the waiter; and the company generally consisted of literary characters, a few Templars, and some citizens who had left off trade. The whole expenses of this day's fete never exceeded a crown, and oftener from three and six-pence to four shillings, for which the party obtained good air and exercise, good living, the example of simple manners, and good conversation."

The reception given to the *Deserted Village*, so full of natural elegance, simplicity, and pathos, was of the warmest kind. The publisher showed at once his skill and generosity, by pressing upon Dr. Goldsmith a hundred pounds, which the author insisted upon returning, when, upon computation, he found that it came to nearly a crown for every couplet, a sum which he conceived no poem could be worth. The sale of the poem made him ample amends for this unusual instance of moderation. Lissoy, near Ballyntahon, where his brother, the clergyman, had his living, claims the honour of being the spot from which the localities of the *Deserted Village* were derived. The church, which tops the neighbouring hill, the mill, and the lake, are still pointed out; and a hawthorn has suffered

the penalty of poetical celebrity, being cut to pieces by those admirers of the bard who desired to have classical tooth-pick cases and tobacco-stoppers. Much of this supposed locality may be fanciful, but it is a pleasing tribute to the poet in the land of his fathers.

Goldsmith's *Abridgments of the History of Rome and England* may here be noticed. They are eminently well calculated to introduce youth to the knowlegde of their studies; for they exhibit the most interesting and striking events, without entering into controversy or dry detail. Yet the tone assumed in the *History of England* drew on the author the resentment of the more zealous Whigs, who accused him of betraying the liberties of the people, when, "God knows," as he expresses himself in a letter to Langton, "I had no thought for or against liberty in my head; my whole aim being to make up a book of a decent size, and which, as Squire Richard says, would do no harm to nobody."

His celebrated play of *She Stoops to Conquer* was Goldsmith's next work of importance. If it be the object of comedy to make an audience laugh, Johnson says that it was better obtained by this play than by any other of the period. Lee Lewes was, for the first time, produced in a speaking character, as young Marlow, and is, therefore, entitled to record his own recollections concerning the piece.

"The first night of its performance, Goldsmith,

instead of being at the theatre, was found sauntering, between seven and eight o'clock, in the Mall, St. James's Park; and it was on the remonstrance of a friend, who told him how useful his presence might be in making some sudden alterations which might be found necessary in the piece, that he was prevailed on to go to the theatre. He entered the stage-door just in the middle of the fifth act, when there was a hiss at the improbability of Mrs. Hardcastle supposing herself forty miles off, though on her own grounds, and near the house. 'What's that?' says the doctor, terrified at the sound. 'Pshaw! doctor,' said Colman, who was standing by the side of the scene, 'don't be fearful of squibs, when we have been sitting almost these two hours upon a barrel of gunpowder.'

"In the *Life of Dr. Goldsmith* prefixed to his *Works*, the above reply of Colman's is said to have happened at the last rehearsal of the piece; but the fact was (I had it from the doctor himself) as I have stated, and he never forgave it to Colman to the last hour of his life."

It may be here noticed, that the leading incident of the piece was borrowed from a blunder of the author himself, who, while travelling in Ireland, actually mistook a gentleman's residence for an inn. It must be owned, that however kind, amiable, and benevolent Goldsmith showed himself to his contemporaries, more especially to such as needed his

assistance, he had no small portion of the jealous and irritable spirit proper to the literary profession. He suffered a newspaper lampoon about this time to bring him into a foolish affray with Evans the bookseller, which did him but little credit.

In the meantime, a neglect of economy, occasional losses at play, and too great a reliance on his own versatility and readiness of talent, had considerably embarrassed his affairs. He felt the pressure of many engagements, for which he had received advances of money, and which it was, nevertheless, impossible for him to carry on with that despatch which the booksellers thought themselves entitled to expect. One of his last publications was a *History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, in six volumes, which is to science what his abridgments are to history; a book which indicates no depth of research, or accuracy of information; but which presents to the ordinary reader a general and interesting view of the subject, couched in the clearest and most beautiful language, and abounding with excellent reflections and illustrations. It was of this work that Johnson threw out the remark which he afterwards interwove in his friend's epitaph,—"He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as agreeable as a Persian Tale."

But the period of his labours was now near. Goldsmith had for some time been subject to fits of the strangury, brought on by too severe application

to sedentary labours; and one of those attacks, aggravated by mental distress, produced a fever. In spite of cautions to the contrary, he had recourse to Dr. James's fever powders, from which he received no relief. He died on the 4th of April, 1774, and was privately interred in the Temple burial-ground. A monument, erected by subscription in Westminster Abbey, bears a Latin inscription from the pen of Dr. Johnson:—

OLIVARI GOLDSMITH,  
 Poetæ, Physici, Historici,  
 Qui nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit,  
 Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit,  
 Sive risus essent movendi,  
 Sive lacrymæ,  
 Affectuum potens at lenis dominator.  
 Ingenio, sublimis, vividus, versitalis;  
 Orationi, grandis, nitidus, venustus.  
 Hoc monumentum memoriam colent,  
 Sodalium amor,  
 Amicorum fides,  
 Lectorum veneratio.  
 Natus in Hiberniæ Ferniæ Longfordiensis,  
 In loco cui nomen Pallas,  
 Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI,  
 Eblanæ literis institutus,  
 Obiit Londini,  
 April IV, MDCCXXIV.

This elegant epitaph was the subject of a petition to Doctor Johnson, in the form of a round robin,

entreating him to substitute an English inscription, as more proper for an author who had distinguished himself entirely by works written in English; but the doctor kept his purpose.

The person and features of Dr. Goldsmith were rather unfavourable. He was a short, stout man, with a round face, much marked with the small-pox, and a low forehead, which is represented as projecting in a singular manner. Yet these ordinary features were marked by a strong expression of reflection and of observation.

The peculiarities of Goldsmith's disposition have been already touched upon in the preceding narrative. He was a friend to virtue, and in his most playful pages never forgets what is due to her. A gentleness, delicacy, and purity of feeling distinguishes whatever he wrote, and bears a correspondence to the generosity of a disposition which knew no bounds but his last guinea. It were almost essential to such a temper that he wanted the proper guards of firmness and decision, and permitted, even when aware of their worthlessness, the intrusions of cunning and effrontery. The story of the *White Mice* is well known; and in the humorous history of the *Haunch of Venison*, Goldsmith has recorded another instance of his being duped. This could not be entirely out of simplicity; for he who could so well embody and record the impositions of Master Jenkinson, might surely have penetrated the



schemes of more ordinary swindlers. But Goldsmith could not give a refusal; and, being thus cheated with his eyes open, no man could be a surer or easier victim to the impostors whose arts he could so well describe. He might certainly have accepted the draft on neighbour Flamborough, and indubitably would have made the celebrated bargain of the gross of green spectacles. With this cullibility of temper was mixed a hasty and eager jealousy of his own personal consequence; he unwillingly admitted that any thing was done better than he himself could have performed it; and sometimes made himself ridiculous by hastily undertaking to distinguish himself upon subjects which he did not understand. But with these weaknesses, and with that of carelessness in his own affairs, terminates all that censure can say of Goldsmith. The folly of submitting to imposition may be well balanced with the universality of his benevolence; and the wit which his writings evince, more than counterbalances his defects in conversation. "As a writer," says Dr. Johnson, "he was of the most distinguished class. Whatever he composed he did it better than any other man could. And whether we regard him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as a historian, he was one of the first writers of his time, and will ever stand in the foremost class."

Excepting some short tales, Goldsmith gave to the department of the novelist only one work, the

inimitable *Vicar of Wakefield*. We have seen that it was suppressed for nearly two years, until the publication of the *Traveller* had fixed the author's fame. Goldsmith had, therefore, time for revisal, but he did not employ it. He had been paid for his labour, as he observed, and could have profited nothing by rendering the work ever so perfect. This, however, was false reasoning, though not unnatural in the mouth of the author, who must earn daily bread by daily labour. The narrative, which in itself is as simple as possible, might have been cleared of certain improbabilities, or rather impossibilities, which it now exhibits. We cannot, for instance, conceive how Sir William Thornhill should contrive to masquerade under the name of Burchell, among his own tenantry, and upon his own estate; and it is absolutely impossible to see how his nephew, the son, doubtless, of a younger brother (since Sir William inherited both title and property), should be nearly as old as the baronet himself. It may be added, that the character of Burchell, or Sir William Thornhill, is in itself extravagantly unnatural. A man of his benevolence would never have so long left his nephew in the possession of wealth which he employed to the worst of purposes. Far less would he have permitted his scheme upon Olivia in a great measure to succeed, and that upon Sophia also to approach consummation; for, in the first instance, he does not interfere at all, and in the

second, his intervention is accidental. These, and some other little circumstances in the progress of the narrative, might easily have been removed upon revision.

But whatever defects occur in the tenor of the story, the admirable ease and grace of the narrative, as well as the pleasing truth with which the principal characters are designed, make the *Vicar of Wakefield* one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed. The principal character, that of the simple pastor himself, with all the worth and excellency which ought to distinguish the ambassador of God to man, and yet with just so much of pedantry and of literary vanity as serves to show that he is made of mortal mould, and subject to human failings, is one of the best and most pleasing pictures ever designed. It is, perhaps, impossible to place frail humanity before us in an attitude of more simple dignity than the Vicar, in his character of pastor, of parent, and of husband. His excellent help-mate, with all her motherly cunning, and housewifely prudence, loving and respecting her husband, but counterplotting his wisest schemes, at the dictates of maternal vanity, forms an excellent counterpart. Both, with their children around them, their quiet labour and domestic happiness, compose a fire-side picture of such a perfect kind, as, perhaps,

is no where else equalled. It is sketched, indeed, from common life, and is a strong contrast to the exaggerated and extraordinary characters and incidents which are the resource of those authors, who, like Bayes, make it their business to elevate and surprise; but the very simplicity of this charming book renders the pleasure it affords more permanent. We read the *Vicar of Wakefield* in youth and in age. We return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature. Whether we choose the pathetic and distressing incidents of the fire, and the scenes at the jail, or the lighter and humorous parts of the story, we find the best and truest sentiments enforced in the most beautiful language; and perhaps there are few characters of purer dignity have been described than that of the excellent pastor rising above sorrow and oppression, and labouring for the conversion of those felons into whose company he had been thrust by his villanous creditor. In too many works of this class, the critics must apologize for or censure particular passages in the narrative, as unfit to be perused by youth and innocence. But the wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied; he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice; and he accomplished his task in a manner which raises him to the highest rank among British authors. We close his volume with a sigh that such an author

should have written so little from the stores of his own genius, and that he should have been so prematurely removed from the sphere of literature which he adorned.

## WALPOLE.

THE Castle of Otranto is remarkable, not only for the wild interest of the story, but as the first modern attempt to found a tale of amusing fiction upon the basis of the ancient romances of chivalry. The neglect and discredit of these venerable legends had commenced so early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when, as we learn from the criticism of the times, Spencer's fairy web was rather approved on account of the mystic and allegorical interpretation, than the plain and obvious meaning of his chivalrous pageant. The drama, which shortly afterwards rose into splendour, and English versions from the innumerable novelists of Italy, supplied to the higher class the amusement which their fathers received from the legends of Don Belianis and the Mirror of Knighthood; and the huge volumes, which were once the pastime of nobles and princes, shorn of their ornaments and shrunk into abridgments, were banished to the kitchen or nursery, or, at best, to the hall window of the old-fashioned country manor-house. Under Charles II. the prevailing taste for French literature dictated the introduction of those dullest of dull folios, the romances of Calprenede and Scuderi, works which

hover between the ancient tale of chivalry and the modern novel. The alliance was so ill conceived, that they retained all the insufferable length and breadth of the prose volumes of chivalry, the same detailed account of reiterated and unvaried combats, the same unnatural and extravagant turn of incident, without the rich and sublime strokes of genius, and vigour of imagination, which often distinguish the early romance ; while they exhibited all the sentimental langour and flat love intrigue of the novel, without being enlivened by its variety of character, just traits of feeling, or acute views of life. Such an ill-imagined species of composition retained its ground longer than might have been expected, only because these romances were called works of entertainment, and there was nothing better to supply their room. Even in the days of the *Spectator*, *Clelia*, *Cleopatra*, and the *Grand Cyrus* (as that precious folio is christened by its butcherly translator), were the favourite closet companions of the fair sex. But this unnatural taste began to give way early in the 18th century, and, about the middle of it, was entirely superseded by the works of Le Sage, Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett ; so that even the very name of romance, now so venerable in the ears of antiquaries and book-collectors, was almost forgotten at the time the *Castle of Otranto* made its first appearance.

The peculiar situation of Horace Walpole, the

ingenious author of this work, was such as gave him a decided predilection for what may be called the Gothic style, a term which he contributed not a little to rescue from the bad fame into which it had fallen, being currently used before his time to express whatever was in pointed and diametrical opposition to the rules of true taste.

Horace Walpole, it is needless to remind the reader, was the son of Sir Robert Walpole, that celebrated minister, who held the reins of government under two successive monarchs, with a grasp so firm and uncontrolled, that his power seemed entwined with the rights of the Brunswick family. Horace was born in the year 1716-17, was educated at Eton, and formed, at that celebrated seminary, a school-boy acquaintance with the celebrated Gray, which continued during the earlier part of their residence together at Cambridge, so that they became fellow travellers by joint consent, in 1739. They disagreed and parted on the continent; the youthful vivacity, and, perhaps, the aristocratic assumption of Walpole, not agreeing with the somewhat formal opinions and habits of the professed man of letters. In the reconciliation afterwards effected between them, Walpole frankly took on himself the blame of the rupture, and they continued friends until Gray's death.

When Walpole returned to England, he obtained a seat in parliament, and entered public life as the



son of a prime minister as powerful as England had known for more than a century. When the father occupied such a situation his sons had necessarily their full share of that court which is usually paid to the near connections of those who have the patronage of the state at their disposal. To the feeling of importance inseparable from the object of such attention, was added the early habit of connecting and associating the interest of Sir Robert Walpole, and even the domestic affairs of his family, with the parties in the Royal Family of England, and with the changes in the public affairs of Europe. It is not, therefore, wonderful, that the turn of Horace Walpole's mind, which was naturally tinged with the love of pedigree, and a value for family honours, should have been strengthened in that bias by circumstances which seemed, as it were, to bind and implicate the fate of his own house with that of princes, and to give the shields of the Walpoles, Shorters, and Robsarts, from whom he descended, an added dignity, unknown to their original owners. If Mr. Walpole ever founded hopes of raising himself to political eminence, and turning his family importance to advantage in his career, the termination of his father's power, and the personal change with which he felt it attended, disgusted him with active life, and early consigned him to literary retirement. He had indeed a seat in parliament for many years, but, unless upon one occasion, when

he vindicated the memory of his father with great dignity and eloquence, he took no share in the debates of the House, and not much in the parties which maintained them. Indeed, in the account which he has himself rendered us of his own views and dispositions with respect to state affairs, he seems rather to have been bent on influencing party spirit, and bustling in public affairs, for the sake of embroilment and intrigue, than in order to carry any particular measure, whether important to himself, or of consequence to the state. In the year 1758, and at the active age of forty-one, secured from the caprices of fortune, he retired altogether from public life, to enjoy his own pursuits and studies in retirement. His father's care had invested him with three good sinecure offices, so that his income, managed with economy, which no one understood better how to practise, was sufficient for his expense in matters of *virtu*, as well as for maintaining his high rank in society.

The subject of Horace Walpole's studies were, in a great measure, dictated by his habits of thinking and feeling, operating upon an animated imagination, and a mind, acute, active, penetrating, and fraught with a great variety of miscellaneous knowledge. Travelling had formed his taste for the fine arts; but his early predilection in favour of birth and rank connected even those branches of study that of gothic history and antiquities. His

*Anecdotes of Painting and Engraving* evince many marks of his favourite pursuits ; but his *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*, and his *Historical Doubts*, we owe entirely to his pursuits as an antiquary and genealogist. The former work evinces, in a particular degree, Mr. Walpole's respect for birth and rank ; yet is, perhaps, ill calculated to gain much sympathy for either. It would be difficult by any process or principle of subdivision, to select a list of as many plebian authors, containing so very few whose genius was worthy of commemoration ; but it was always Walpole's foible to disclaim a professed pursuit of public favour, for which, however, he earnestly thirsted, and to hold himself forth as a privileged author, "one of the right-hand file," who did not mean to descend into the common arena, where professional authors contend before the public eye, but wrote merely to gratify his own taste, by throwing away a few idle hours on literary composition. There was much affectation in this, which accordingly met the reward which affectation usually incurs ; as Walpole seems to have suffered a good deal from the criticism which he affected to despise, and occasionally from the neglect which he appeared to court.

The *Historical Doubts* are an acute and curious example how minute antiquarian research may shake our faith in the facts most pointedly averred by general history. It is remarkable also to ob-

serve, how, in defending a system which was probably at first adopted as a mere literary exercise, Mr. Walpole's doubts acquired, in his own eyes, the respectability of certainties, in which he could not brook controversy.

Mr. Walpole's domestic occupations, as well as his studies, bore evidence of a taste for English antiquities, which was then uncommon. "He loved," as a satirist has expressed it, "to gaze on gothic toys through gothic glass;" and the villa at Strawberry-hill, which he chose for his abode, gradually swelled into a feudal castle, by the addition of turrets, towers, galleries, and corridors, whose fretted roofs, carved pannels, and illuminated windows, were garnished with the appropriate furniture of scutcheons, armorial bearings, shields, tilting lances, and all the panoply of chivalry. The gothic order of architecture is now so generally, and, indeed, indiscriminately, used, that we are rather surprised if the country-house of a tradesman retired from business does not exhibit lanceolated windows, divided by stone-shafts, and garnished by painted glass, a cup-board in the form of a cathedral-stall, and a pig-house with a front borrowed from the façade of an ancient chapel. But, in the middle of the eighteenth century, when Mr. Walpole began to exhibit specimens of the gothic style, and to show how patterns, collected from cathedrals and monuments, might be applied to chimney-pieces, ceil-

ings, windows, and balustrades, he did not comply with the dictates of a prevailing fashion, but pleased his own taste, and realized his own visions, in the romantic cast of the mansion which he erected.

Mr. Walpole's lighter studies were conducted upon the same principle which influenced his historical researches and his taste in architecture. His extensive acquaintance with foreign literature, on which he justly prided himself, was subordinate to his pursuits as an English antiquary and genealogist, in which he gleaned subjects for poetry and for romantic fiction, as well as for historical controversy. These are studies, indeed, proverbially dull; but it is only when they are pursued by those whose fancies nothing can enliven. A Horace Walpole, or a Thomas Warton, is not a mere collector of dry and minute facts, which the general historian passes over with disdain. He brings with him the torch of genius, to illuminate the ruins through which he loves to wander; nor does the classic scholar derive more inspiration from the pages of Virgil, than such an antiquary from the glowing, rich, and powerful feudal painting of Froissart. His mind being thus stored with information, accumulated by researches into the antiquities of the middle ages, and inspired, as he himself informs us, by the romantic cast of his own habitation, Mr. Walpole resolved to give the public a specimen of the gothic style

adapted to modern literature, as he had already exhibited its application to modern architecture.

As, in his model of a gothic modern mansion, our author had studiously endeavoured to fit to the purposes of modern convenience, or luxury, the rich, varied, and complicated tracery and carving of the ancient cathedral, so, in *The Castle of Otranto*, it was his object to unite the marvellous turn of incident, and imposing tone of chivalry, exhibited in the ancient romance, with that accurate display of human character, and contrast of feelings and passions which is, or ought to be, delineated in the modern novel. But Mr. Walpole, being uncertain of the reception which a work upon so new a plan might experience from the world, and not caring, perhaps, to encounter the ridicule which would have attended its failure, *The Castle of Otranto* was, in 1764, ushered into the world, as a translation, by William Marshall, from the Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, a sort of anagram, or translation of his own name. It did not, however, long impose upon the critics of the day. It was soon suspected to proceed from a more elegant pen than that of any William Marshall, and, in the second edition, he disclosed the secret. In a private letter, he gave the following account of the origin of the composition, in which he contradicts the ordinary assertion, that it was completed in eight days.

“ March 9, 1763.

“ Shall I confess to you what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled, like mine, with gothic story), and that, on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase, I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. Add, that I was very glad to think of any thing rather than politics. In short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening I wrote from the time I had drank my tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hands and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking in the middle of a paragraph.”

It does not seem that the authenticity of the narrative was at first suspected. Mr. Gray writes to Mr. Walpole, on December 30, 1764: “ I have received *The Castle of Otranto*, and return you my thanks for it. It engages our attention here (*i. e.* at Cambridge), makes some of us cry a little; and all, in general, afraid to go to bed o' nights. We take it for a translation; and should believe it to

be a true story, if it were not for St. Nicholas.” The friends of the author, as appears from the letter already quoted, were probably soon permitted to peep beneath the veil he had thought proper to assume; and, in the second edition, it was altogether withdrawn by a preface, in which the tendency and nature of the work are shortly commented upon and explained. From the following passage, translated from a letter by the author to Madame Deffand, it would seem that he repented of having laid aside his incognito; and, sensitive to criticism, like most dilettante authors, was rather more hurt by the raillery of those who liked not his tale of chivalry than gratified by the applause of his admirers. “So they have translated my *Castle of Otranto*, probably in ridicule of the author. So be it;—however, I beg you will let their raillery pass in silence. Let the critics have their own way; they give me no uneasiness. I have not written the book for the present age, which will endure nothing but *cold common sense*. I confess to you, my dear friend (and you will think me madder than ever), that this is the only one of my works with which I am myself pleased; I have given reins to my imagination till I became on fire with the visions and feelings which it excited. I have composed it in defiance of rules, of critics, and of philosophers; and it seems to me just so much the better for that very reason. I am even persuaded, that some time



hereafter, when taste shall resume the place which philosophy now occupies, my poor *Castle* will find admirers; we have actually a few among us already, for I am just publishing the third edition. I do not say this in order to mendicate your approbation.\* I told you from the beginning you would not like the book—your visions are all in a different style. I am not sorry that the translator has given the second preface; the first, however, accords best with the style of the fiction. I wished it to be believed ancient, and almost every body was imposed upon.” If the public applause, however, was sufficiently qualified, by the voice of censure, to alarm the feelings of the author, the continued demand for various editions of *The Castle of Otranto* showed how high the work really stood in popular estimation, and probably eventually reconciled Mr. Walpole to the taste of his own age. This romance has been justly considered not only as the original and model of a peculiar species of composition, attempted and successfully executed by a man of great genius, but as one of the standard works of our lighter literature.

Horace Walpole continued the mode of life which

\* Madame Deffand had mentioned having read the *Castle of Otranto* twice over; but she did not add a word of approbation. She blamed the translator for giving the second preface; chiefly because she thought it might commit Walpole with Voltaire.

he had adopted so early as 1753, until his death unless it may be considered as an alteration, that his sentiments of Whiggism, which, he himself assures us, almost amounted to Republicanism, received a shock from the French Revolution, which he appears from its commencement to have thoroughly detested. The tenor of his life could be hardly said to suffer interruption by his father's Earldom of Orford devolving upon him when he had reached his seventy-fourth year, by the death of his nephew. He scarce assumed the title, and died a few years after it had descended to him, March 2, 1797, at his house in Berkeley square.

While these sheets are passing through the press, we have found in Miss Hawkins's very entertaining reminiscences of her early abode at Twickenham, the following description of the person of Horace Walpole, before 1772, giving us the most lively idea of the person and manners of a man of fashion about the middle of the last century :—" His figure was not merely tall, but more properly long and slender to excess ; his complexion, and particularly his hands, of a most unhealthy paleness. His eyes were remarkably bright and penetrating, very dark and lively :—his voice was not strong, but his tones were extremely pleasant, and, if I may so say, highly gentlemanly. I do not remember his common gait ; he always entered a room in that style of affected delicacy, which fashion had then made al-

most natural; *chapeau bras* between his hands, as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm; knees bent, and feet on tiptoe, as if afraid of a wet floor.—His dress in visiting was most usually, in summer, when I most saw him, a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in the tambour, partridge silk stockings, and gold buckles, ruffles and frill generally lace. I remember, when a child, thinking him very much under dressed, if at any time, except in mourning, he wore hemmed cambric. In summer, no powder, but his wig combed straight, and showing his very smooth pale forehead, and queued behind; in winter, powder.”

We cannot help thinking that this most respectable lady, by whose communications respecting eminent individuals the public has been so much obliged, has been a little too severe on the gothic whims of the architecture at Strawberry-hill. The admirers of the fine arts should have toleration for each other, when their fervent admiration of a favourite pursuit leads them into those extremes which are caviar to the multitude. And as the ear of the architect should not be hasty to condemn the over-learned conceits of the musician, so the eye of the musician should have some toleration for the turrets and pinnacles of the fascinated builder.

It is foreign to our plan to say much of Horace Walpole's individual character. His works bear

evidence to his talents; and, even striking out the horribly impressive but disgusting drama of the *Mysterious Mother*, and the excellent Romance which we are about to analyze more critically, they must leave him the reputation of a man of excellent taste, and certainly of being the best letter-writer in the English language.

In private life, his temper appears to have been precarious; and though expensive in indulging his own taste, he always seems to have done so on the most economical terms possible. He is often, in his epistolary correspondence, harsh and unkind to Madame Deffand, whose talents, her blindness, and her enthusiastic affection for him, claimed every indulgence from a warm hearted man. He is also severe and rigid towards Bentley, whose taste and talents he had put into continual requisition for the ornaments of his house. These are unamiable traits of character, and they have been quoted and exaggerated. But his memory has suffered most on account of his conduct towards Chatterton, in which we have always thought he was perfectly defensible. That unhappy son of genius endeavoured to impose upon Walpole a few stanzas of very inferior merit as ancient; and sent him an equally gross and palpable imposture under the shape of a pretended list of painters. Walpole's sole crime lies in not patronizing at once a young man who only appeared before him in the character of a very inartificial im-

postor, though he afterwards proved himself a gigantic one. The fate of Chatterton lies, not at the door of Walpole, but of the public at large, who, two years (we believe) afterwards, were possessed of the splendid proofs of his natural powers, and any one of whom was as much called upon as Walpole to prevent the most unhappy catastrophe.

Finally, it must be recorded, to Walpole's praise, that, though not habitually liberal, he was strictly just, and readily parted with that portion of his income which the necessities of the state required. He may, perhaps, have mistaken his character when he assumes as his principal characteristic, "disinterestedness and contempt of money," which, he intimates, was with him less "a virtue than a passion." But by the generous and apparently most sincere offer to divide his whole income with Marshal Conway, he showed, that if there existed in his bosom more love of money than perhaps he was himself aware of, it was subjugated to the influence of the nobler virtues and feelings.

We are now to offer a few remarks on *The Castle of Otranto*, and on the class of compositions to which it belongs, and of which it was the precursor.

It is doing injustice to Mr. Walpole's memory to allege, that all which he aimed at in *The Castle of Otranto*, was "the art of exciting surprise and horror;" or, in other words, the appeal to that secret and reserved feeling of love for the marvellous

and supernatural, which occupies a hidden corner in almost every one's bosom. Were this all which he had attempted, the means by which he sought to attain his purpose might, with justice, be termed both clumsy and puerile. But Mr. Walpole's purpose was both more difficult of attainment, and more important when attained. It was his object to draw such a picture of domestic life and manners, during the feudal times, as might actually have existed, and to paint it chequered and agitated by the action of supernatural machinery, such as the superstition of the period received as matter of devout credulity. The natural parts of the narrative are so contrived, that they associate themselves with the marvellous occurrences; and, by the force of that association, render those *speciosa miracula* striking and impressive, though our cooler reason admits their impossibility. Indeed, to produce, in a well cultivated mind, any portion of that surprise and fear which are founded on supernatural events, the frame and tenor of the whole story must be adjusted in perfect harmony with this main-spring of the interest. He who, in early youth, has happened to pass a solitary night in one of the few ancient mansions which the fashion of more modern times has left undespoiled of their original furniture, has probably experienced, that the gigantic and preposterous figures dimly visible in the defaced tapestry—the remote clang of the distant doors

which divide him from living society—the deep darkness which involves the high and fretted roof of the apartment—the dimly seen pictures of ancient knights, renowned for their valour, and perhaps for their crimes—the varied and indistinct sounds which disturb the silent desolation of a half-deserted mansion—and, to crown all, the feeling that carries us back to ages of feudal power and papal superstition, join together to excite a corresponding sensation of supernatural awe, if not of terror. It is in such situations, when superstition becomes contagious, that we listen with respect, and even with dread, to the legends which are our sport in the garish light of sunshine, and amid the dissipating sights and sounds of every day life. Now, it seems to have been Walpole's object to attain, by the minute accuracy of a fable, sketched with singular attention to the costume of the period in which the scene was laid, that same association which might prepare his reader's mind for the reception of prodigies congenial to the creed and feelings of the actors. His feudal tyrant, his distressed damsel, his resigned yet dignified churchman—the castle itself, with its feudal arrangements of dungeons, trap-doors, oratories, and galleries—the incidents of the trial, the chivalrous procession, and the combat;—in short, the scene, the performers, and action, so far as it is natural, form the accompaniments of his spectres and his miracles, and have the same effect

on the mind of the reader, that the appearance and drapery of such a chamber as we have described may produce upon that of a temporary inmate. This was a task which required no little learning, no ordinary degree of fancy, no common portion of genius, to execute. The association of which we have spoken is of a nature peculiarly delicate, and subject to be broken and disarranged. It is, for instance, almost impossible to build such a modern gothic structure as shall impress us with the feelings we have endeavoured to describe. It may be grand, or it may be gloomy; it may excite magnificent or melancholy ideas; but it must fail in bringing forth the sensation of supernatural awe, connected with halls that have echoed to the sounds of remote generations, and have been pressed by the footsteps of those who have long since passed away. Yet Horace Walpole has attained, in composition, what, as an architect, he must have felt beyond the power of his art. The remote and superstitious period in which his scene is laid—the art with which he has furnished forth its gothic decorations—the sustained, and, in general, the dignified tone of feudal-manners—prepare us gradually for the favourable reception of prodigies which, though they could not really have happened at any period, were consistent with the belief of all mankind at that in which the action is placed. It was therefore, the author's object, not merely to excite surprise and terror, by



the introduction of supernatural agency, but to wind up the feelings of his reader till they became for a moment identified with those of a ruder age, which

“Held each strange tale devoutly true.”

The difficulty of attaining this nice accuracy of delineation may be best estimated by comparing *The Castle of Otranto* with the less successful efforts of later writers ; where, amid all their attempts to assume the tone of antique chivalry, something occurs in every chapter so decidedly incongruous, as at once reminds us of an ill-sustained masquerade, in which ghosts, knights-errant, magicians, and damsels gent, are all equipped in hired dresses from the same warehouse in Tavistock-street.

There is a remarkable particular in which Mr. Walpole's steps have been departed from by the most distinguished of his followers.

Romantic narrative is of two kinds—that which, being in itself possible, may be matter of belief at any period ; and that which, though held impossible by more enlightened ages, was yet consonant with the faith of earlier times. The subject of *The Castle of Otranto* is of the latter class. Mrs. Radcliffe, a name not to be mentioned without the high respect due to genius, has endeavoured to effect a compromise between those different styles of narrative, by referring her prodigies to an explana-

tion founded on natural causes, in the latter chapters of her romances. To this improvement upon the gothic romance there are so many objections that we own ourselves inclined to prefer, as more simple and impressive, the narrative of Walpole, which details supernatural incidents as they would have been readily believed and received in the eleventh or twelfth century. In the first place, the reader feels indignant at discovering that he has been cheated into sympathy with terrors, which are finally explained as having proceeded from some very simple cause; and the interest of a second reading is entirely destroyed by his having been admitted behind the scenes at the conclusion of the first. Secondly, the precaution of relieving our spirits from the influence of supposed supernatural terror, seems as unnecessary in a work of professed fiction, as that of the prudent Bottom, who proposed that the human face of the representative of his lion should appear from under his mask, and acquaint the audience plainly that he was a man as other men, and nothing more than Snug the joiner. Lastly, these substitutes for supernatural agency are frequently to the full as improbable as the machinery which they are introduced to explain away and to supplant. The reader who is required to admit the belief of supernatural interference, understands precisely what is demanded of him; and, if he be a gentle reader, throws his mind into the

attitude best adapted to humour the deceit which is presented for his entertainment, and grants, for the time of perusal, the premises on which the fable depends.\* But if the author voluntarily binds himself to account for all the wondrous occurrences which he introduces, we are entitled to exact that the explanation shall be natural, easy, ingenious, and complete. Every reader of such works must remember instances, in which the explanation of mysterious circumstances in the narrative has proved equally, nay, even more incredible, than if they had been accounted for by the agency of supernatural beings; for the most incredulous must allow, that the interference of such agency is more possible than that an effect resembling it should be produced by an inadequate cause. But it is unnecessary to enlarge further on a part of the subject, which we have only mentioned to exculpate our author from the charge of using machinery more clumsy than his tale from its nature required. The bold assertion of the actual existence of phantoms and apparitions seems to us to harmonize much more naturally with the manners of feudal times, and to produce a more powerful effect upon the reader's mind, than any attempt to reconcile the superstitious credulity of feudal ages with the phi-

\* There are instances, to the contrary, however. For example, that stern votary of severe truth, who cast aside *Gulliver's Travels* as containing a parcel of improbable fictions.

losophic scepticism of our own, by referring those prodigies to the operation of fulminating powder, combined mirrors, magic lanterns, trap-doors, speaking trumpets, and such like apparatus of German phantasmagoria.

It cannot, however, be denied, that the character of the supernatural machinery in *The Castle of Otranto* is liable to objections. Its action and interference is rather too frequent, and presses too hard and constantly upon the same feelings in the reader's mind, to the hazard of diminishing the elasticity of the spring upon which it should operate. The fund of fearful sympathy which can be afforded by a modern reader to a tale of wonder is much diminished by the present habits of life and modes of education. Our ancestors could wonder and thrill through all the mazes of an interminable metrical romance of fairy land, and of an enchantment, the work perhaps of some

“Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind  
Believed the magic wonders which he sung.”

But our habits, and feelings, and belief are different, and a transient, though vivid, impression is all that can be excited by a tale of wonder even in the most fanciful mind of the present day. By the too frequent recurrence of his prodigies, Mr. Walpole ran, perhaps, his greatest risk of awakening *la raison froide*, that “cold common sense,” which he justly

deemed the greatest enemy of the effect which he hoped to produce. It may be added also, that the supernatural occurrences of *The Castle of Otranto* are brought forward into too strong day-light, and marked by an over degree of distinctness and accuracy of outline. A mysterious obscurity seems congenial at least, if not essential, to our ideas of disembodied spirits, and the gigantic limbs of the ghost of Alphonso, as described by the terrified domestics, are somewhat too distinct and corporeal to produce the feelings which their appearance is intended to excite. This fault, however, if it be one, is more than compensated by the high merit of many of the marvellous incidents in the romance. The descent of the picture of Manfred's ancestor, although it borders on extravagance, is finely introduced, and interrupts an interesting dialogue with striking effect. We have heard it observed that the animated figure should rather have been a statue than a picture. We greatly doubt the justice of the criticism. The advantage of the colouring induces us decidedly to prefer Mr. Walpole's fiction to the proposed substitute. There are few who have not felt, at some period of their childhood, a sort of terror from the manner in which the eye of an ancient portrait appears to fix that of the spectator from every point of view. It is, perhaps, hypercritical to remark, (what, however, Walpole, of all authors, might have been expected to attend to,)

that the time assigned to the action, being about the 11th century, is rather too early for the introduction of a full-length portrait. The apparition of the skeleton hermit to the prince of Vincenza was long accounted a master-piece of the horrible; but of late the valley of *Jehosophat* could hardly supply the dry bones necessary for the exhibition of similar spectres, so that injudicious and repeated imitation has, in some degree, injured the effect of its original model. What is more striking in *The Castle of Otranto*, is the manner in which the various prodigious appearances, bearing each upon the other, and all upon the accomplishment of the ancient prophesy denouncing the ruin of the house of Manfred, gradually prepare us for the grand catastrophe. The moonlight vision of Alphonso dilated to immense magnitude, the astonished group of spectators in the front, and the shattered ruins of the castle in the back-ground, are briefly and sublimely described. We know no passage of similar merit, unless it be the apparition of Fadzcan, or Faudoun, in an ancient Scottish poem.\*

That part of the romance which depends upon human feelings and agency, is conducted with the dramatic talent which afterwards was so conspicu-

\* This spectre, the ghost of a follower whom he had slain upon suspicion of treachery, appeared to no less a person than Wallace, the champion of Scotland, in the ancient castle of Gask-hall. See Ellis's *Specimens*, vol. i.

ous in *The Mysterious Mother*. The persons are indeed rather generic than individual; but this was in a degree necessary to a plan, calculated rather to exhibit a general view of society and manners during the times which the author's imagination loved to contemplate, than the more minute shades and discriminating points of particular characters. But the actors in the romance are strikingly drawn, with bold outlines becoming the age and nature of the story. Feudal tyranny was, perhaps, never better exemplified than in the character of Manfred. He has the courage, the art, the duplicity, the ambition of a barbarous chieftain of the dark ages, yet with touches of remorse and natural feeling, which preserve some sympathy for him when his pride is quelled, and his race extinguished. The pious monk, and the patient Hippolita, are well contrasted with this selfish and tyrannical prince. Theodore is the juvenile hero of a romantic tale, and Matilda has more interesting sweetness than usually belongs to its heroine. As the character of Isabella is studiously kept down, in order to relieve that of the daughter of Manfred, few readers are pleased with the concluding insinuation, that she became at length the bride of Theodore. This is in some degree a departure from the rules of chivalry; and, however natural an occurrence in common life, rather injures the magic illusions of romance. In other respects, making allowance for the extraordinary incidents of

a dark and tempestuous age, the story, so far as within the course of natural events, is happily detailed, its progress is uniform, its events interesting and well combined, and the conclusion grand; tragical, and affecting.

The style of *The Castle of Otranto* is pure and correct English of the earlier and more classical standard. Mr. Walpole rejected, upon taste and principle, those heavy though powerful auxiliaries which Dr. Johnson imported from the Latin language, and which have since proved to many a luckless wight, who has essayed to use them, as unmanageable as the gauntlets of Eryx,

“ ————— et pondus et ipsa

Huc illuc vinciorum immensa volumina versat.”

Neither does the purity of Mr. Walpole's language and the simplicity of his narrative admit that luxuriant, florid, and high-varnished landscape painting; with which Mrs. Radcliffe often adorned, and not unfrequently encumbered, her kindred romances. Description for its own sake, is scarcely once attempted in *The Castle of Otranto*; and if authors would consider how very much this restriction tends to realize narrative, they might be tempted to abridge, at least, the showy and wordy exuberance of a style fitter for poetry than prose. It is for the dialogue that Walpole reserves his strength; and it is re-



markable how, while conducting his mortal agents with all the art of a modern dramatist, he adheres to the sustained tone of chivalry which marks the period of the action. This is not attained by patching his narrative or dialogue with glossarial terms, or antique phraseology, but by taking care to exclude all that can awaken modern associations. In the one case, his romance would have resembled a modern dress, preposterously decorated with antique ornaments; in its present shape, he has retained the form of the ancient armour, but not its rust and cobwebs. In illustration of what is above stated, we refer the reader to the first interview of Manfred with the prince of Vicenza, where the manners and language of chivalry are finely painted, as well as the perturbation of conscious guilt, confusing itself in attempted exculpation, even before a mute accuser. The characters of the inferior domestics have been considered as not bearing a proportion sufficiently dignified to the rest of the story. But this is a point on which the author has pleaded his own cause fully in the original prefaces.

We have only to add, in conclusion to these desultory remarks, that if Horace Walpole, who led the way in this new species of literary composition, has been surpassed by some of his followers in diffuse brilliancy of description, and perhaps in the art of detaining the mind of the reader in a state of feverish and anxious suspense, through a protracted

and complicated narrative, more will yet remain with him than the single merit of originality and invention. The applause due to chastity and precision of style—to a happy combination of supernatural agency with human interest—to a tone of feudal manners and language, sustained by characters strongly drawn and well discriminated—and to unity of action, producing scenes alternately of interest and of grandeur; the applause, in fine, which cannot be denied to him who can excite the passions of fear and of pity, must be awarded to the author of *The Castle of Otranto*.

## MACKENZIE.

FOR the biographical part of the following memoir, we are chiefly indebted to a short sketch of the life of our distinguished contemporary, compiled from the most authentic sources and prefixed to a beautiful duodecimo edition of *The Man of Feeling*, printed at Paris a few years since. We have had the further advantage of correcting and enlarging the statements which it contains from undoubted authority.

HENRY MACKENZIE, Esq. was born at Edinburgh in August, 1745, on the same day on which Prince Charles Stuart landed in Scotland. His father was Dr. Joshua Mackenzie, of that city, and his mother, Margaret, the eldest daughter of Mr. Rose, of Kilrayock, of a very ancient family in Nairnshire. After being educated at the High-school and University of Edinburgh, Mr. Mackenzie, by the advice of some friends of his father, was articled to Mr. Inglis of Redhall, in order to acquire a knowledge of the business of the exchequer, a law department in which he was likely to have fewer competitors than in any other in Scotland.

To this, although not perfectly compatible with

that literary taste which he very early displayed, he applied with due diligence; and in 1765, went to London to study the modes of English exchequer practice, which, as well as the constitution of the courts, are similar in both countries. While there, his talents induced a friend to solicit his remaining in London, and qualifying himself for the English bar. But the anxious wishes of his family that he should reside with them, and the moderation of an unambitious mind, decided his return to Edinburgh; and here he became, first partner, and afterwards successor to Mr. Inglis, in the office of Attorney for the Crown.

His professional labour, however, did not prevent his attachment to literary pursuits. When in London he sketched some part of his first, and very popular work, *The Man of Feeling*, which was published in 1771, without his name; and was so much a favourite with the public, as to become, a few years after, the occasion of a remarkable fraud. A Mr. Eccles, of Bath, observing that this work was accompanied by no author's name, laid claim to it, transcribed the whole in his own hand, with blottings, interlineations, and corrections, and maintained his right with such plausible pertinacity, that Messrs. Cadell and Strahan (Mr. Mackenzie's publishers) found it necessary to undeceive by a formal contradiction.

In a few years after this, he published his *Man of*

*the World*, which seems to be intended as a second part to *The Man of Feeling*. It breathes the same tone of exquisite moral delicacy, and of refined sensibility. In his former fiction, he imagined a hero constantly obedient to every emotion of his moral sense. In *The Man of the World* he exhibited, on the contrary, a person rushing headlong into misery and ruin, and spreading misery all around him, by pursuing a happiness which he expected to obtain in defiance of the moral sense. His next production was *Julia de Roubigné*, a novel in a series of letters. The fable is very interesting, and the letters are written with great elegance and propriety of style.

In 1776, Mr. Mackenzie was married to Miss Pennel Grant, daughter of Sir Ludovick Grant, of Grant, bart., and Lady Margaret Ogilvy, by whom he has a numerous family, the eldest of whom, Mr. Henry Joshua Mackenzie, has, while these sheets are passing the press, been called to the situation of a Judge of the Supreme Court of Sessions, with the unanimous approbation of his country.

In 1777 or 1778, a society of gentlemen of Edinburgh were accustomed at their meetings to read short essays of their composition, in the manner of the *Spectator*, and Mr. Mackenzie being admitted a member, after hearing several of them read, suggested the advantage of giving greater variety to their compositions by admitting some of a lighter

kind, descriptive of common life and manners ; and he exhibited some specimens of the kind in his own writing. From this arose the *Mirror*,\* a well-known periodical publication, to which Mr. Mackenzie performed the office of editor, and was also the principal contributor. The success of the *Mirror* naturally led Mr. Mackenzie and his friends to undertake the *Lounger*,† upon the same plan, which was not less read and admired.

When the Royal Society of Edinburgh was instituted, Mr. Mackenzie became one of its most active members, and he has occasionally enriched the volumes of its *Transactions* by his valuable communications, particularly by an elegant tribute to the memory of his friend Judge Abercromby, and a memoir on German Tragedy. He is one of the original members of the Highland Society ; and by him have been published the volumes of their *Transactions*, to which he has prefixed an account of the institution and principal proceedings of the Society, and an interesting account of Gaelic poetry.

In the year 1792, he was one of those literary men who contributed some little occasional tracts to disabuse the lower orders of the people, led astray at that time by the prevailing frenzy of the French Revolution. In 1793, he wrote the *Life of Dr. Blacklock*, at the request of his widow, prefixed

\* Begun the 23d January, 1779 ; ended 27th May, 1780.

† Begun the 6th February, 1785 ; ended 6th January, 1787.

to a quarto edition of that blind poet's works. His intimacy with Blacklock gave him an opportunity of knowing the habits of his life, the bent of his mind, and the feelings peculiar to the privation of sight, under which Blacklock laboured.

The literary society of Edinburgh, in the latter part of last century, whose intimacy he enjoyed, is described in his *Life of John Home*, which he read to the Royal Society in 1812, and as a sort of Supplement to that Life, he then added some Critical Essays, chiefly on Dramatic Poetry, which have not been published.

In 1808, Mr. Mackenzie published a complete edition of his works, in eight volumes octavo; including a tragedy, the *Spanish Father*, and a comedy, *The White Hypocrite*, which last was once performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden. The tragedy had never been represented, in consequence of Mr. Garrick's opinion, that the catastrophe was of too shocking a kind for the modern stage; though he owned the merit of the poetry, the force of some of the scenes, and the scope for fine action in the character of Alphonso, the leading person of the drama. In this edition also is given a carefully corrected copy of the tragedy of *The Prince of Tunis*, which had been represented at Edinburgh, in 1763, with great success.

Among the prose compositions of Mr. Mackenzie, is a political tract, *An Account of the Proceed-*

*ings of the Parliament of 1784*, which he was induced to write at the persuasion of his old and steady friend, Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville. It introduced him to the countenance and regard of Mr. Pitt, who revised the work with particular care and attention, and made several corrections in it with his own hand. Some years after, Mr. Mackenzie was appointed, on the recommendation of Lord Melville and Right Hon. George Rose, also his particular friend, to the office of Comptroller of the Taxes for Scotland, an appointment of very considerable labour and responsibility, and in discharging which this fanciful and ingenious author has shown his power of entering into and discussing the most dry and complicated details, when that became a matter of duty.

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The time, we trust, is yet distant, when speaking of this author as of those with whom his genius ranks him, a biographer may with delicacy trace his personal character and peculiarities, or record the manner in which he has discharged the duties of a citizen. When that hour shall arrive, we trust few of his own contemporaries will be left to mourn him; but we can anticipate the sorrow of a later generation, when deprived of the wit which enlivened their hours of retirement, the benevolence



which directed and encouraged their studies, and the wisdom which instructed them in their duties to society. It is enough to say here, that Mr. Mackenzie survives, venerable and venerated, as the last link of the chain which connects the Scottish literature of the present age with the period when there were giants in the land—the days of Robertson, and Hume, and Smith, and Home, and Clerk, and Fergusson; and that the remembrance of an era so interesting could not have been intrusted to a sounder judgment, a more correct taste, or a more tenacious memory. It is much to be wished, that Mr. Mackenzie, taking a wider view of his earlier years than in the *Life of Home*, would place on a more permanent record some of the anecdotes and recollections with which he delights society. We are about to measure his capacity for the task by a singular standard, but it belongs to Mr. Mackenzie's character. He has, we believe, shot game of every description which Scotland contains (deer, and probably grouse, excepted), on the very grounds at present occupied by the extensive and splendid streets of the New Town of Edinburgh; has sought for hares and wild-ducks, where there are now palaces, churches, and assembly rooms; and has witnessed moral revolutions as surprising as this extraordinary change of local circumstances. These mutations in manners and in morals have been gradual indeed in their progress, but most

important in their results, and they have been introduced into Scotland within the last half century. Every sketch of them, or of the circumstances by which they were produced, from the pen of so intelligent an observer, and whose opportunities of observation have been so extensive, would, however slight and detached, rival in utility and amusement any work of the present time.

As an author, Mr. Mackenzie has shown talents both for poetry and the drama. Indeed, we are of opinion, that no man can succeed perfectly in the line of fictitious composition, without most of the properties of a poet, though he may be no writer of verses ; but Mr. Mackenzie possesses the powers of melody in addition to those of conception. He has given a beautiful specimen of legendary poetry, in two little Highland ballads, a style of composition which becomes fashionable from time to time, on account of its simplicity and pathos, and then is again laid aside, when worn out by the servile imitators, to whom its approved facility offers its chief recommendation. But it is as a novelist that we are now called on to consider our author's powers ; and the universal and permanent popularity of his writings entitles us to rank him among the most distinguished of his class. His works possess the rare and invaluable property of originality, to which all other qualities are as dust in the balance, and the sources to which he resorts to excite our in-

terest are rendered accessible by a path peculiarly his own. The reader's attention is not riveted, as in Fielding's works, by strongly marked character, and the lucid evolution of a well-constructed fable; or, as in Smollett's novels, by broad and strong humour, and a decisively superior knowledge of human life in all its varieties; nor, to mention authors whom Mackenzie more nearly resembles, does he attain the pathetic effect which is the object of all three, in the same manner as Richardson, or as Sterne. An accumulation of circumstances, sometimes amounting to tediousness, a combination of minutely traced events, with an ample commentary on each, were thought necessary by Richardson to excite and prepare the mind of the reader for the affecting scenes which he has occasionally touched with such force; and without denying him his due merit, it must be allowed that he has employed preparatory volumes in accomplishing what has cost Mackenzie and Sterne only a few pages, perhaps only a few sentences.

On the other hand, although the last two named authors have, in particular passages, a more strong resemblance to each other than those formerly named, yet there remain such essential points of difference betwixt them, as must secure for Mackenzie the praise of originality which we have claimed for him. It is needless to point out to the reader the difference between the general character of

their writings, or how far the chaste, correct, almost studiously decorous manner and style of the works of the author of *The Man of Feeling*, differ from the wild wit, and intrepid contempt at once of decency, and regularity of composition, which distinguish *Tristram Shandy*. It is not in the general conduct or style of their works that they in the slightest degree approach; nay, no two authors in the British language can be more distinct. But even in the particular passages where both had in view to excite the reader's pathetic sympathy, the modes resorted to are different. The pathos of Sterne in some degree resembles his humour, and is seldom attained by simple means; a wild, fanciful, beautiful flight of thought and expression is remarkable in the former, as an extravagant, burlesque, and ludicrous strain of thought and language characterises the latter. The celebrated passage where the tear of the recording angel blots the profane oath of Uncle Toby out of the register of heaven, a flight so poetically fanciful as to be stretched to the very verge of extravagance, will illustrate our position. To attain his object—that is, to make us thoroughly sympathize with the excited state of mind which betrays Uncle Toby into the indecorous assertion which forms the ground work of the whole, the author calls Heaven and Hell into the lists, and represents, in a fine poetic frenzy, its effects on the accusing spirit and the registering

angel. Let this be contrasted with the fine tale of *La Roche*, in which Mackenzie has described, with such unexampled delicacy and powerful effect, the sublime scene of the sorrows and resignation of the deprived father. This also is painted reflectively ; that is, the reader's sympathy is excited by the effect produced on one of the drama, neither angel nor devil, but a philosopher, whose heart remains sensitive, though his studies have misled his mind into the frozen regions of scepticism. To say nothing of the tendency of the two passages, which will scarce, in the mind of the most unthinking, bear any comparison, we would only remark, that Mackenzie has given us a moral truth, Sterne a beautiful trope ; and that if the one claims the palm of superior brilliancy of imagination, that due to nature and accuracy of human feeling must abide with the Scottish author.

Yet, while marking this broad and distinct difference between these two authors, the most celebrated certainly among those who are termed sentimental, it is but fair to Sterne to add, that although Mackenzie has rejected his license of wit and flights of imagination, retrenched, in a great measure, his episodical digressions, and, altogether banished the indecency and buffoonery to which he had too frequent recourse, still their volumes must be accounted as belonging to the same class ; and, amongst the thousand imitators who have pursued their path,

we cannot recollect one English author who is entitled to the same honour. The foreign authors Riccoboni and Marivaux belong to the same department; but of the former we remember little, and the latter, though full of the most delicate touches, often depends for effect on the turn of phrase, and the protracted embarrassments of artificial gallantry, more than upon the truth and simplicity of nature. The *Heloise* and *Emile* partake of the insanity of their author, and are exaggerated, though most eloquent, descriptions of overwhelming passion, rather than works of sentiment.

In future compositions, the author dropped even that resemblance which the style of *The Man of Feeling* bears, in some particulars, to the works of Sterne; and his country may boast, that in one instance at least, she has produced in Mackenzie, a writer of pure musical Addisonian prose, which retains the quality of vigour without forfeiting that of clearness and simplicity.

We are hence led to observe, that the principal object of Mackenzie, in all his novels, has been to reach and sustain a tone of moral pathos, by representing the effect of incidents, whether important or trifling, upon the human mind, and especially on those which were not only just, honourable, and intelligent, but so framed as to be responsive to those finer feelings, to which ordinary hearts are callous. This is the direct and professed object of

Mackenzie's first work, which is in fact no narrative, but a series of successive incidents, each rendered interesting by the mode in which they operate on the feelings of Harley. The attempt had been perilous in a meaner hand; for, sketched by a pencil less nicely discriminating, Harley, instead of a being whom we love, respect, sympathise with, and admire, had become the mere Quixote of sentiment, an object of pity, perhaps, but of ridicule at the same time. Against this the author has guarded with great skill; and, while duped and swindled in London, Harley neither loses our consideration as a man of sense and spirit, nor is subjected to that degree of contempt with which readers in general regard the misadventures of a novice upon town, whilst they hug themselves in their own superior knowledge of the world. Harley's spirited conduct towards an impertinent passenger in the stage-coach, and his start of animated indignation on listening to Edward's story, are skilfully thrown in, to satisfy the reader that his softness and gentleness of temper were not allied to effeminacy, and that he dared, on suitable occasions, do all that might become a man. We have heard that some of Harley's feelings were taken from those of the author himself, when, at his first entrance on the dry and barbarous study of municipal law, he was looking back, like Blackstone, on the land of the Muses, which he was condemned to leave behind him. It

has also been said, that the fine sketch of Miss Walton was taken from the heiress of a family of distinction, who ranked at that time high in the Scottish fashionable world. But such surmises are little worth the tracing; for we believe no original character was ever composed by any author, without the idea having been previously suggested by something which he had observed in nature.

The other novels of Mr. Mackenzie, although assuming a more regular and narrative form, are, like *The Man of Feeling*, rather the history of effects produced on the human mind by a series of events, than the narrative of those events themselves. The villany of Sindall is the tale of a heart hardened to selfishness, by incessant and unlimited gratification of the external senses; a contrast to that of Harley, whose mental feelings have acquired such an ascendancy as to render him unfit for the ordinary business of life. The picture of the formèr is so horrid, that we would be disposed to deny its truth, did we not unhappily know, that sensual indulgence, in the words of Burns,

— “Hardens a’ within,  
And petrifies the feelings;”

and that there never did, and never will exist, any thing permanently noble and excellent in a character which was a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial. The history of the victims of Sindall’s arts



and crimes, particularly the early history of the Annesley's is exquisitely well drawn; and, perhaps, the scene between the brother and sister by the pond, equals any part of the author's writings. Should the reader doubt this, he may easily make the experiment, by putting it into the hands of any young person of feeling and intelligence, and of an age so early as not to have forgotten the sports and passions of childhood.

The beautiful and tragic tale of *Julia de Roubigné* is of a very different tenor from *The Man of the World*; and we have good authority for thinking, that it was written in some degree as a counter-part to the latter work. A friend of the author, the celebrated Lord Kames, we believe, had represented to Mr. Mackenzie, in how many poems, plays, and novels, the distress of the piece is made to turn upon the designing villany of some one of the dramatis personæ. On considering his observations, the author undertook, as a task fit for his genius, the composition of a story, in which the characters should be all naturally virtuous, and where the calamities of the catastrophe should arise, as frequently happens in actual life, not out of schemes of premeditated villany, but from the excess and over indulgence of passions and feelings, in themselves blameless, nay, praiseworthy, but which, encouraged to a morbid excess, and coming into fatal though fortuitous concourse with each

other, lead to the most disastrous consequences. Mr. Mackenzie executed his purpose ; and as the plan fell in most happily with the views of a writer, whose object was less to describe external objects, than to read a lesson on the human heart, he has produced one of the most heart-wringing histories which has ever been written. The very circumstances which palliate the errors of the sufferers, in whose distress we interest ourselves, point out to the reader that there is neither hope, remedy, nor revenge. When a Lovelace or a Sindall comes forth like an evil principle, the agent of all the misery of the scene, we see a chance of their artifices being detected, at least the victims have the consciousness of innocence, the reader the stern hope of vengeance. But when, as in *Julia de Roubigné*, the revival of mutual affection on the part of two pure and amiable beings, imprudently and incautiously indulged, awakens, and not unjustly, the jealous honour of a high-spirited husband—when we see Julia precipitated into misery by her preference of filial duty to early love, Savillon, by his faithful and tender attachment to a deserving object, and Montauban, by a jealous regard to his spotless fame, we are made aware, at the same time, that there is no hope of aught but the most unhappy catastrophe. The side of each sufferer is pierced by the very staff on which he leant, and the natural and virtuous feelings which they at first most legiti-

mately indulged, precipitate them into error, crimes, remorse, and misery. The cruelty to which Montauban is hurried, may, perhaps, be supposed to exempt him from our sympathy, especially in an age when such crimes as that of which Julia is suspected, are usually borne by the injured parties with more equanimity than her husband displays. But the irritable habits of the time, and of his Spanish descent, must plead the apology of Montauban, as they are admitted to form that of Othello. Perhaps, on the whole, *Julia de Roubigné* gives the reader too much actual pain to be so generally popular as *The Man of Feeling*, since we have found its superiority to that beautiful essay on human sensibility often disputed by those whose taste we are in general inclined to defer to. The very acute feelings which the work usually excites among the readers whose sympathies are liable to be awakened by scenes of fictitious distress, we are disposed to ascribe to the extreme accuracy and truth of the sentiments, as well as to the beautiful manner in which they are expressed. There are few who have not had, at one period of life, disappointments of the heart to mourn over, and we know no book which recalls the recollection of such more severely than *Julia de Roubigné*.

We return to consider the key-note, as we may term it, on which Mackenzie has formed his tales of fictitious wo, and which we have repeatedly

described to be the illustration of the nicer and finer sensibilities of the human breast. To attain this point and to place it in the strongest and most unbroken light, the author seems to have kept the other faculties with which we know him to be gifted, in careful subordination. The northern Addison, who revived the art of periodical writing, and sketched, though with a light pencil, the follies and the lesser vices of his time, has showed himself a master of playful satire. The historian of the Homespun family may place his narrative, without fear of shame, by the side of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Colonel Caustic and Umfraville are masterly conceptions of the *laudator temporis acti*; and many personages in those papers which Mr. Mackenzie contributed to the *Mirror* and *Lounger* attest with what truth, spirit, and ease he could describe, assume, and sustain a variety of characters. The beautiful landscape painting which he has exhibited in many passages (take, for example, that where the country seat of the old Scottish lady and its accompaniments are so exquisitely delineated) assures us of the accuracy and delicacy of his touch in delineating the beauties of nature.

But all these powerful talents, any single one of which might have sufficed to bring men of more bounded powers into notice, have been by Mackenzie carefully subjected to the principal object which he proposed to himself—the delineation of the hu-

man heart. Variety of character he has introduced sparingly, and has seldom recourse to any peculiarity of incident, availing himself generally of those which may be considered as common property to all writers of romance. His sense of the beauties of nature, and his power of describing them, are carefully *kept down*, to use the expression of the artists; and like the single straggling bough, which shades the face of his sleeping veteran, just introduced to relieve his principal object, but not to rival it. It cannot be termed an exception to this rule, though certainly a peculiarity of this author, that on all occasions where sylvan sports can be introduced, he displays an intimate familiarity with them, and, from personal habits, to which we have elsewhere alluded, shows a delight to dwell for an instant upon a favorite topic.

*Lastly*, the wit which sparkles in his periodical essays, and, we believe, in his private conversation, shows itself but little in his Novels; and, although his peculiar vein of humour may be much more frequently traced, yet it is so softened down, and divested of the broad ludicrous, that it harmonizes with the most grave and affecting parts of the tale, and becomes, like the satire of Jaques, only a more humorous shade of melancholy. In short, Mackenzie aimed at being the historian of feeling, and has succeeded in the object of his ambition. But as mankind are never contented, and as critics are certainly

no exception to a rule so general, we could wish that, without losing or altering a line that our author has written, he had condescended to give us, in addition to his stores of sentiment—a romance on life and manners, by which, we are convinced, he would have twisted another branch of laurel into his garland. However, as Sebastian expresses it,

“What had been, is unknown; what is, appears:”

we must be proudly satisfied with what we have received, and happy that, in this line of composition, we can boast a living author, of excellence like that of Henry Mackenzie.

## CLARA REEVE.

CLARA REEVE, the ingenious authoress of *The Old English Baron*, was the daughter of the reverend William Reeve, M. A., rector of Freston, and of Kerton, in Suffolk, and perpetual curate of St. Nicholas. Her grandfather was the reverend Thomas Reeve, rector of Storeham, Aspal, and afterwards of St. Mary, Stoke, in Ipswich, where the family had been long resident, and enjoyed the rights of free burghers. Miss Reeve's mother's maiden name was Smithies, daughter of — Smithies, goldsmith and jeweller to king George I.

In a letter to a friend Mrs. Reeve thus speaks of her father. My father was an old Whig ; from him I have learned all that I know ; he was my oracle ; he used to make me read the parliamentary debates while he smoked his pipe after supper. I gaped and yawned over them at the time, but, unawares to myself, they fixed my principles once and for ever. He made me read Rapin's *History of England*; the information it gave made amends for its dryness. I read *Cato's Letters*, by Trenchard and Gordon ; I read the Greek and Roman Histories, and *Plutarch's Lives* ; all these at an age when few people of either sex can read their names.

The Reverend Mr. Reeves, himself one of a family of eight children, had the same number; and, it is, therefore, likely, that it was rather Clara's strong natural turn for study, than any degree of exclusive care which his partiality bestowed, that enabled her to acquire such a stock of early information. After his death, his widow resided in Colchester, with three of their daughters; and it was here that Miss Clara Reeve first became an authoress, by translating from Latin Barclay's fine old romance, entitled *Argenis*, published in 1762, under the title of *The Phœnix*. It was in 1767 that she produced her first and most distinguished work. It was published by Mr. Dilly of the Poultry (who gave ten pounds for the copy-right), under the title of *The Champion of Virtue, a Gothic Story*. The work came to a second edition in the succeeding year, and was then first called *The Old English Baron*. The cause of the change we do not pretend to guess; for if Fitzowen be considered as the Old English Baron, we do not see wherefore a character passive in himself, from beginning to end, and only acted upon by others, should be selected to give a name to the story. We ought not to omit to mention, that this work is inscribed to Mrs. Bridgen, the daughter of Richardson, who is stated to have lent her assistance to the revision and correction of the work.

The success of *The Old English Baron* encourag-



ed Miss Reeve to devote more of her leisure hours to literary composition, and she published, in succession, the following works: *The Two Mentors, a Modern Story*; *The Progress of Romance through Times, Countries, and Manners*; *The Exile, or Memoirs of Count de Cronstadt*, the principal incidents of which are borrowed from a novel by M. D'Arnaud; *The School for Widows, a Novel*; *Plans of Education, with Remarks on the System of other Writers*, in a duodecimo volume; and *The Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, a Natural Son of Edward the Black Prince, with Anecdotes of many other Eminent Persons of the Fourteenth Century*.

To these works we have to add another tale of which the interest turned upon supernatural appearances. Miss Reeve informs the public, in a preface to a late edition of *The Old English Baron*, that, in compliance with the suggestion of a friend, she had composed *Castle Connor, an Irish Story*, in which apparitions were introduced. The manuscript being intrusted with some careless or unfaithful person, fell aside, and was never recovered.

The various novels of Clara Reeve are all marked by excellent good sense, pure morality, and a competent command of those qualities which constitute a good romance. They were, generally speaking, favourably received at the time, but none of them took the same strong possession of the public mind as *The Old English Baron*, upon which the fame

of the author may be considered as now exclusively rested.

Miss Reeve, respected and beloved, led a retired life, admitting no materials for biography, until December 3, 1803, when she died at Ipswich, her native city, at the advanced age of seventy-eight years. She was buried in the church-yard of St. Stephens, according to her particular direction, near to the grave of her friend, the Reverend Mr. Derby. Her brother, the Reverend Thomas Reeve, still lives, as also her sister, Mrs. Sarah Reeve, both advanced in life. Another brother, bred to the navy, attained the rank of vice-admiral in that service.

Such are the only particulars which we have been able to collect concerning this accomplished and estimable woman, and in their simplicity the reader may remark that of her life and of her character. As critics, it is our duty to make some further observations, which shall be entirely confined to her most celebrated work, *The Old English Baron*.

The authoress has herself informed us, that *The Old English Baron* is the "literary offspring of *The Castle of Otranto*," and she has obliged us by pointing out the different and more limited view which she has adopted, of the supernatural machinery employed by Horace Walpole. She condemns the latter for the extravagance of several of his conceptions; for the gigantic size of his sword

and helmet; and for the violent fictions of a walking picture, and a ghost in a hermit's cowl. A ghost, she contends, to be admitted as an ingredient in romance, must behave himself like ghosts of sober demeanour, and subject himself to the common rules still preserved in grange and hall, as circumscribing beings of his description.

We must, however, notwithstanding her authority, enter our protest against fettering the realm of shadows by the opinions entertained of it in the world of realities. If we are to try ghosts by the ordinary rules of humanity, we bar them of their privileges entirely. For instance, why admit the existence of an ærial phantom, and deny it the terrible attribute of magnifying its stature? Why admit an enchanted helmet, and not a gigantic one? Why allow as impressive, the fall of a suit of armour, under circumstances which attribute its fall to a supernatural influence, and deny the same supernatural influence the power of producing the illusion (for it is only represented as such) upon *Manfred*, by the portrait of his ancestor appearing to be animated? It may be said, and it seems to be Miss Reeve's argument, that there is a verge of probability, which even the most violent figment must not transgress; but we reply by the cross question, that, if we are once to subject our preternatural agents to the limits of human reason, where are we to stop? We might, under such a rule, demand of ghosts an account of

the very circuitous manner in which they are pleased to open their communications with the living world. We might, for example, move a *quo warranto* against the spectre of the murdered Lord Lovel for lurking about the eastern apartment, when it might have been reasonably expected, that if he did not at once impeach his murderers to the next magistrate, he might at least have put Fitzowen into the secret, and thus obtained the succession of his son more easily than by the circuitous route of a single combat. If there should be an appeal against this imputation, founded on the universal practice of ghosts in such circumstances, who always act with singular obliquity in disclosing the guilt of which they complain, the matter becomes a question of precedent; in which view of the case, we may vindicate Horace Walpole for the gigantic exaggeration of his phantom, by the similar expansion of the very terrific vision of Fawdoun, in Blind Harry's *Life of Wallace*; and we could, were we so disposed, have paralleled his moving picture by the example of one with which we ourselves had some acquaintance, which was said both to move and to utter groans, to the great alarm of a family of the highest respectability.

Where, then, may the reader ask, is the line to be drawn? On this principle, we reply, solely, that the author himself, being in fact the magician, shall evoke no spirits whom he is not capable of endow-

ing with manners and language corresponding to their supernatural character. Thus Shakspeare, drawing such characters, as Caliban and Ariel, gave them reality, not by appealing to actual opinions which his audience might entertain respecting the possibility or impossibility of their existence, but by investing them with such attributes as all readers and spectators recognized as those which must have corresponded to such extraordinary beings, had their existence been possible. If he had pleased to put into language the "squeaking and gibbering" of those disembodied phantoms which haunted the streets of Rome, no doubt his wonderful imagination could have filled up the sketch, which, marked by these two emphatic and singularly felicitous expressions, he has left as characteristic of the language of the dead.

In this point of view our authoress has, with equal judgment and accuracy, confined her flight within those limits on which her pinions could support her, and though we are disposed to contest her general principle, we are willing to admit it as a wise and prudent one, so far as applied to regulate her own composition. In no part of *The Old English Baron*, or of any other of her works, does Miss Reeve show the possession of a rich and powerful imagination. Her dialogue is sensible, easy, and agreeable, but neither marked by high flights of fancy, nor strong bursts of passion. Her apparition is an

ordinary fiction, of which popular superstition used to furnish a thousand instances, when nights were long, and a family had little better to do, when assembled round a Christmas log, than to listen to such tales. She is very felicitously cautious in showing us no more of Lord Lovel's ghost than she needs must; he is a silent apparition, palpable to the sight only, and never brought forward into such broad day-light as might have dissolved our reverence. And so far, we repeat, the authoress has used her own power to the utmost advantage, and gained her point by not attempting a step beyond it. But we cannot allow that the rule which, in her own case, has been well and wisely adopted, ought to circumscribe a bolder and a more imaginative writer.

In what may be called the costume, or keeping, of the chivalrous period in which the scene of both is laid, the language and style of Horace Walpole, together with his intimate acquaintance with the manners of the middle ages, form an incalculable difference betwixt *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Old English Baron*. Clara Reeve, probably, was better acquainted with Plutarch and Rapin than with Froissart or Olivier de la Marche. This is no imputation on the taste of that ingenious lady. In her days, Macbeth was performed in a general's full uniform, and Lord Hastings was dressed like a modern high-chamberlain going to court. Now,

more attention to costume is demanded, and authors, as well as players, are obliged to make attempts, however fantastic or grotesque, to imitate the manners on the one hand, and the dress on the other, of the times in which their scene is laid. Formerly nothing of this kind was either required or expected; and it is not improbable that the manner in which Walpole circumscribes his dialogue (in most instances) within the stiff and stern precincts prescribed by a strict attention to the manners and language of the times, is the first instance of such restrictions. In *The Old English Baron*, on the contrary, all parties speak and act much in the fashion of the seventeenth century, employ the same phrases of courtesy, and adopt the same tone of conversation. Baron Fitzowen, and the principal characters, talk after the fashion of country squires of that period, and the lower personages like gaffers and gammers of the same era. And "were but the combat in lists left out," or converted into a modern duel, the whole train of incidents, might, for any peculiarity to be traced in the dialect or narration, have taken place in the time of Charles II, or in either of the two succeeding reigns. As it is, the story reads as if it had been transcribed into the language, and according to the ideas of this latter period. Yet, we are uncertain, whether, upon the whole, this does not rather add to than diminish the interest of the work; at least, it gives an interest of

a different kind, which, if it cannot compete with that which arises out of a highly exalted and poetical imagination, and a strict attention to the character and manners of the middle ages, has yet this advantage, that it reaches its point more surely, than had a higher, more difficult, and more ambitious line of composition been attempted.

To explain our meaning :—He that would please the modern world, yet present the exact impression of a tale of the middle ages, will repeatedly find that he must, in spite of *spite*, sacrifice the last to the first object, and eternally expose himself to the just censure of the rigid antiquary, because he must, to interest the readers of the present time, invest his characters with language and sentiments unknown to that period; and thus his utmost efforts only attain a sort of composition between the true and the fictitious—just as the dress of Lear, as performed on the stage, is neither that of a modern sovereign nor the cerulean painting and bear-hide with which the Britons, at the time when that monarch is supposed to have lived, tattooed their persons, and sheltered themselves from cold. All this inconsistency is avoided by adopting the style of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers.

It is no doubt true, that *The Old English Baron*, written in the latter and less ambitious taste, is sometimes tame and tedious, not to say mean and tiresome. The total absence of peculiar character



—for every person introduced is rather described as one of a genus than as an original, discriminated, and individual person—may have its effect in producing the tedium which loads the story in some places. This is a general defect in the novels of the period, and it was scarce to be expected that the amiable and accomplished authoress, in her secluded situation, and with acquaintance of events and characters derived from books alone, should have rivalled those authors who gathered their knowledge of the human heart from having, like Fielding and Smollett, become acquainted, by sad experience, with each turn of “many coloured life.” Nor was it to be thought that she should have emulated in this particular her prototype Walpole, who as a statesman, a poet, and man of the world, “who knew the world like a man,” has given much individual character to his sketch of Manfred. What we here speak of is not the deficiency in the style and costume, but a certain creeping and low line of narrative and sentiment; which may be best illustrated by the grave and minute accounting into which Sir Philip Harclay and the Baron Fitzowen enter—after an event so unpleasant as the judgment of Heaven upon a murderer, brought about by a judicial combat, and that combat occasioned by the awful and supernatural occurrences in the eastern chamber—where we find the arrears of the estate

gravely set off against the education of the heir, and his early maintenance in the baron's family. Yet even these prolix, minute, and unnecessary details, are precisely such as would occur in a similar story told by a grandsire or grandame to a circle assembled round a winter's fire; and while they take from the dignity of the composition, and would therefore have been rejected by a writer of more exalted imagination, do certainly add in some degree to its reality, and bear in that respect a resemblance to the art with which De Foe impresses on his readers the truth of his fictions, by the insertion of many minute, and immaterial, or unnatural circumstances, which we are led to suppose could only be recorded because they are true. Perhaps to be circumstantial and abundant in minute detail, and in one word, though an unauthorized one, to be somewhat *prosy*, is one mode of securing a certain necessary degree of credulity in hearing a ghost-story. It gives a sort of quaint antiquity to the whole, as belonging to the times of "superstitious elde," and those whom we have observed to excel in oral narratives of such a nature, usually study to secure the attention of their audience by employing this art. At least, whether owing to this mode of telling her tale, or to the interest of the story itself, and its appeal to the secret reserve of superstitious feeling which maintains its influence in most bosoms, *The Old*

*English Baron* has always produced as strong an effect as any story of the kind, although liable to the objections which we have freely stated, without meaning to impeach the talents of the amiable authoress.

## ROBERT BAGE.

ROBERT BAGE, a writer of no ordinary merit in the department of fictitious composition, was one of that class of men occurring in Britain alone, who unite successfully the cultivation of letters with the pursuit of professions, which, upon the continent, are considered as incompatible with the character of an author. The professors of letters are, in most nations, apt to form a *caste* of their own, into which they may admit men educated for the learned professions, on condition, generally speaking, that they surrender their pretensions to the lucrative practice of them ; but from which mere burghers, occupied in ordinary commerce, are as severely excluded, as *roturiers* were of old from the society of the *noblesse*. The case of a paper-maker or a printer employing their own art upon their own publications, would be thought uncommon in France or Germany ; yet such were the stations of Bage and Richardson.

The editor has been obliged by Miss Catharine Hutton, daughter of Mr. Hutton, of Birmingham, well known as an ingenious and successful antiquary, with a memoir of the few incidents marking the life of Robert Bage, whom a kindred genius, as

well as some commercial intercourse, combined to unite in the bonds of strict friendship. The communication is extremely interesting, and the extracts from Bage's letters show, that amidst the bitterness of political prejudices, the embarrassment of commercial affairs, and all the teasing technicalities of business, the author of *Barham Downs* still maintained the good-humoured gaiety of his natural temper. One would almost think the author must have drawn from his own private letter-book and correspondence the discriminating touches which mark the men of business in his novels.

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The father of Robert Bage was a paper-maker at Darley, a hamlet on the river Derwent, adjoining the town of Derby, and was remarkable only for having had four wives. Robert was the son of the first, and was born at Darley, on the 29th of February, 1728. His mother died soon after his birth; and his father, though he retained his mill, and continued to follow his occupation, removed to Derby, where his son received his education at a common school. His attainments here, however, were very uncommon, and such as excited the surprise and admiration of all who knew him. At seven years old, he had made a proficiency in Latin. To a knowledge of the Latin tongue succeeded a know-

ledge of the art of making paper, which he acquired under the tuition of his father.

At the age of twenty-three, Robert Bage married a young woman, who possessed beauty, good sense, good temper, and money. It may be presumed, that the first of these was the first forgotten; the two following secured his happiness in domestic life, the last aided him in the manufacture of paper, which he commenced at Elford, four miles from Tamworth, and conducted to the end of his days.

Though no man was more attentive to business, and no one in the country made paper so good of its kind, yet the direction of a manufactory, combined with his present literary attainments, did not satisfy the comprehensive mind of Robert Bage. His manufactory, under his eye, went on with the regularity of a machine, and left him leisure to indulge his desire of knowledge. He acquired the French language from books alone, without any preceptor; and his familiarity with it is evinced by his frequent, perhaps too frequent use of it in *The Fair Syrian*. Nine years after his marriage, he studied mathematics; and, as he makes one of his characters say, and as he probably thought respecting himself, "he was obliged to this science for a correct imagination, and a taste for uniformity in the common actions of life."

In the year 1765, Bage entered into partnership with three persons, in an extensive manufactory of

iron (one of them the celebrated Dr. Darwin); and, at the end of about fourteen years, when the partnership terminated, he found himself a loser, it is believed, of fifteen hundred pounds. The reason and philosophy of the paper-maker might have struggled long against so considerable a loss; the man of letters committed his cause to a better champion—literary occupation—the tried solace of misfortune, want, and imprisonment. He wrote the novel of *Mount Henneth*, in two volumes, which was sold to Lowndes for thirty pounds, and published in 1781. The strong mind, playful fancy, liberal sentiments, and extensive knowledge of the author, are every where apparent; but, as he says himself, “too great praise is a bad letter of recommendation,” and truth, which he worshipped, demands the acknowledgment, that its sins against decorum are manifest.

The succeeding works of Bage were, *Barham Downs*, two volumes, published 1784; *The Fair Syrian*, two volumes, published (about) 1787; *James Wallace*, three volumes, published 1788; *Man as he is*, four volumes, published 1792; *Herm-sprong, or Man as he is not*, three volumes, published 1796. It is, perhaps, without a parallel in the annals of literature, that, of six different works, comprising a period of fifteen years, the last should be, as it unquestionably is, the best. Several of

Bage's novels were translated into German, and published at Frankfort.

Whoever has read Hayley's Life of Cowper will not be sorry that an author should speak for himself, instead of his biographer speaking for him : on this principle are given some extracts from the letters of Robert Bage to his friend William Hutton. Hutton purchased nearly all the paper which Bage made during forty-five years ; and, though Bage's letters were letters of business, they were written in a manner peculiarly his own, and friendship was, more or less, interwoven in them ; for trade did not, in him, extinguish or contract one finer feeling of the soul. Bage, in his ostensible character of a paper-maker, says,—

*“ March, 28, 1785.*

“ I swear to thee, I am one of the most cautious men in the world, with regard to the excise ; I constantly interpret against myself in doubtful points ; and, if I knew a place where I was vulnerable, I would arm it with the armour of Achilles. I have already armed myself all over with the armour of righteousness, but that signifies nothing with our people of excise.”

*“ August, 15, 1787.*

“ Oh how I wish thou would'st bend all thy powers to write a History of Excise—with cases—show-



ing the injustice, the inequality of clauses in acts, and the eternal direction every new one takes towards the oppression of the subject : it might be the most useful book extant. Of whites and blues, blue demy only can come into thy magazine, and that at great risk of contention with the Lords of the Exchequer ; for I know not whether I have understood the sense of people who have seldom the good luck to understand themselves. The paper sent is charged at the lowest price at which a sober paper-maker can live and drink small beer."

*" December 10, 1788.*

" Authors, especially when they have acquired a certain degree of reputation, should be candid, and addicted to speak good, as well as evil, of poor dumb things. The rope paper is too thin, I own ; but why abuse it from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot ? If I have eyes, it has many good qualities, and I hope the good people of Birmingham may find them out. But it is too thin.—I am heartily and sincerely concerned for it : but, as I cannot make it thicker, all I can do is to reduce the price. Thou proposest three-pence a ream—I agree to it. If thou really believest six-pence ought to be abated, do it. Combine together the qualities of justice and mercy, and to their united influence I leave thee."

*“ February 23, 1789.*

“ The certainty that it cannot be afforded at the stipulated price, makes me run my rope paper too thin. Of this fault, however, I must mend, and will mend, whether thou can'st, or can'st not mend my price. I had rather lose some profit than sink a tolerable name into a bad one.”

*“ March 11, 1793.*

“ I make no bill-of-parcels. I do not see why I should give myself the trouble to make thee bills of parcels, as thou can'st make them thyself; and, more especially, when it is probable thou wilt make them more to my liking than the issues of my own pen. If the paper is below the standard so far as to oblige thee to lower the price, I am willing to assist in bearing the loss. If the quantity overburthens thee, take off a shilling a bundle—or take off two; for thy disposition towards me—I see it with pleasure—is kindly.”

*“ June 30, 1795.*

“ Every thing looks black and malignant upon me.—Men clamouring for wages which I cannot give—women threatening to pull down my mill—rags raised by freight and insurance—excise officers depriving me of paper! Say, if thou can'st, whether these gentlemen of the excise office can seize paper after it has left the maker's possession?—

after it has been marked?—stamped?—signed with the officer's name?—Excise duty paid?—Do they these things?—Am I to hang myself?"

" *June 6, 1799.*

"Thou can'st not think how teasing the excise officers are about colour. They had nearly seized a quantity of common cap paper, because it was whitened by the frost. They have an antipathy to any thing whiter than sackcloth."

Bage actually had paper seized by the excise officers, and the same paper liberated, seized again, and again liberated. If his wisdom and integrity have been manifested in the foregoing extracts, the ignorance and folly of these men, or of their masters, must be obvious.

A few extracts, not so immediately connected with conduct in trade, may not be superfluous.—

"I swear by Juno, dear William, that one man cannot be more desirous of dealing with another than I am with thee. The chain that connects us cannot be snapped asunder without giving me pain almost to torture. Thou art not so sure of having found the place where Henry the Seventh was lost as thou might'st have been of finding Elford and a friend."

"I received thy pamphlet,\* and am not sure whether I have not read it with more pleasure than

\* Dissertation on Juries.

any of thy former works. It is lively and the reasoning just. Only remember, it is sometimes against the institutions of juries and county courts that thou hast directed thy satire, which, I think, ought to be confined to the abuses of them. But why abusest thou me? Did'st thou not know of *Mount Henneth*, and *Barham Downs*, before publication? Yea, thou did'st; I think thou did'st also of *The Fair Syrian*. Of what, then, dost thou accuse me? Be just. And why dost thou call me an infidel? Do I not believe in every thing thou sayest? And am I not impatient for thy *Derby*? I am such a scoundrel as to grumble at paying 30 per cent. *ad valorem*, which I really do, and more, on my boards, as if one could do too much for one's king and country. But I shall be rewarded when thy *History of Derby* comes forth."

"Miss Hutton was the harbinger of peace and good-will from the reviewers. I knew she had taste and judgment; I knew also that her encomium would go beyond the just and proper bounds; but I also believed she would not condescend to flatter without some foundation."

"Eat my breakfast quietly, thou varlet! So I do when my house does not smoke, or my wife scold, or the newspapers do not tickle me into an irritation, or my men clamour for another increase of wages. But I must get my bread by eating as little of it as possible; for my Lord Pitt will

want all I can screw of overplus. No matter, ten years\* hence, perhaps, I shall not care a far-thing."

"Another meeting among my men! Another (the third) raising of wages! What will all this end in? William Pitt seems playing off another of his alarming manœuvres—Invasion—against the meeting of Parliament to scare us into a quiet parting with our money."

"If thou hast been again into Wales, and hast not expired in ecstasy, I hope to hear from thee soon. In the interim, and always and evermore, I am thine."

"I am afraid thy straggling mode of sending me any body's bills, and every body's bills, will subject me often to returned ones. But I have received good at thy hands, and shall I not receive evil? Every thing in this finest, freest, best, of all possible countries, grows worse and worse, and why not thou?"

"I looked for the anger thou talked'st of in thy last, but could not find it; and for what would'st thou have been angry, if thou could'st? Turn thy wrath from me, and direct it against the winds and the fogs. In future, I fear it will be directed against the collectors of dirty rags in London and in Ger-

\* Bage lived eight months after the date of this letter, which was written Jan. 24, 1801.

many, where the prices, 'have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished'—but will not be so, because we begin the century by not doing what we ought to do. What we shall do at the end of it I neither know nor care."

In October, 1800, Bage had visited Hutton at Birmingham, where the latter still passed the hours of business, and had taken Bennett's Hill in his way home, to call on Catherine Hutton, the daughter of his friend. Both were alarmed at the alteration in Bage's countenance, which exhibited evident symptoms of declining health. They believed that they should see him no more; and he was probably impressed with the same idea, for, on quitting the house at Birmingham, he cordially shook hands with Samuel Hutton, the grand nephew of his friend, and, said, "Farewell, my dear lad, we shall meet again in heaven."

At home, Bage seems to have indulged the hope of another meeting in the present world; for, two months after his letter of January, he says, in a letter to Hutton, "Tell Miss Hutton that I have thought of her some hundred times since I saw her; insomuch that I feared I was falling in love. I do love her as much as a man seventy-three years of age, and married, ought to love. I like the idea of paying her a visit, and will try to make it in reality some time—but not yet." In April he was scarcely able to write a letter. In June he was again inca-

pable of attending to business ; but in reply to his friend, who had mentioned paying him a visit, he said, " I should have been glad and sorry, dear William, to have seen thee at Tamworth." On the 1st of September, 1801, he died.

Bage had quitted Elford, and during the last eight years of his life he resided at Tamworth, where he ended his days. His wife survived him, but is since dead. He had three sons, one of whom died as he was approaching manhood, to the severe affliction of his father. Charles, the eldest son, settled at Shrewsbury, where he was the proprietor of a very extensive cotton manufactory. He died in 1822, at the age of 70. Edward, the younger son, was apprenticed to a surgeon and apothecary at Tamworth, where he afterwards followed his profession. He died many years before his brother. Both possessed a large portion of their father's talents, and equalled him in integrity and moral conduct.

In his person, Robert Bage was rather under the middle size, and rather slender, but well proportioned. His complexion was fair and ruddy ; his hair light and curling ; his countenance intelligent, yet mild and placid. His manners were courteous, and his mind was firm. His integrity, his honour, his devotion to truth, were undeviating and incorruptible ; his humanity, benevolence, and generosity, were not less conspicuous in private life, than

they were in the principal characters in his works. He supplied persons he never saw with money, because he heard they were in want. He kept his servants and his horses to old age, and both men and quadrupeds were attached to him. He behaved to his sons with the unremitting affection of a father ; but, as they grew up, he treated them as men and equals, and allowed them that independence of mind and conduct which he claimed for himself.

On the subject of servants, Bage says, in *The Fair Syrian*, " I pity those unhappy masters, who, with unrelenting gravity, damp the effusions of a friendly heart, lest something too familiar for their lordly pride should issue from a servant's lips."

Of a parent he says, in the same work, " Instead of the iron rod of parents, he used only the authority of mild persuasion, and cultivated the affections of his children by social intercourse, and unremitting tenderness." It matters not into what mouth Robert Bage put these sentiments ; they were his own, his practice was conformable to them, and their good effects were visible on all around him.

The following comparison between Robeat Bage and his friend, William Hutton, was written by Charles Bage, son of the former, in a letter to Catherine Hutton, daughter of the latter, October 6th, 1816.

" The contrast between your father's life and mine is curious. Both were distinguished by great



natural talents ; both were mild, benevolent, and affectionate, qualities which were impressed on their countenances ; both were indignant at the wantonness of pride and power ; both were industrious, and both had a strong attachment to literature ; yet with these resemblances, their success in life was very different ; my father never had a strong passion for wealth, and he never rose into opulence. Your father's talents were continually excited by contact with ' the busy haunts of men ;' my father's were repressed by a long residence in an unfrequented place, in which he shunned the little society he might have had, because he could not relish the conversation of those whose minds were less cultivated than his own. In time, such was the effect of habit, that, although when young, he was lively and fond of company, he enjoyed nothing but his book and pen, and a pool at quadrille with ladies. He seems, almost always, to have been fonder of the company of ladies than of men."

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After this satisfactory account of Bage's life and character, there remains nothing for the editor but to offer a few critical remarks upon his compositions.

The general object of Robert Bage's compositions is rather to exhibit character, than to compose a narrative ; rather to extend and infuse his

own political and philosophical opinions, in which a man of his character was no doubt sincere, than merely to amuse the reader with the wonders, or melt him with the sorrows of a fictitious tale. In this respect he resembled Voltaire and Diderot, who made their most formidable assaults on the system of religion and politics which they assailed, by embodying their objections in popular narratives. Even the quaint, facetious, ironical style of this author seems to be copied from the lesser political romances of the French school; and if Bage falls short of his prototypes in wit, he must be allowed to exhibit, upon several occasions, a rich and truly English vein of humour, which even Voltaire does not possess.

Respecting the tendency and motive of these works, it is not the editor's purpose to say much. Bage appears, from his peculiar style, to have been educated a quaker, and he has always painted the individuals of that primitive sect of Christians in amiable colours, when they are introduced as personages into his novels. If this was the case, however, he appears to have wandered from their tenets into the wastes of scepticism; and a sectary, who had reasoned himself into an infidel, could be friend neither to the church of England, nor the doctrines which she teaches. His opinions of state affairs were perhaps a little biassed by the frequent visits of the excise men, who levied taxes on his commodi-

ties, for the purpose of maintaining a war which he disapproved of. It was most natural that a person who considered tax-gatherers as extortioners, and the soldiers, who were paid by the taxes, as licensed murderers, should conceive the whole existing state of human affairs to be wrong; and if he was conscious of talent, and the power of composition, he might, at the same time, naturally fancy that he was called upon to put it to rights. No opinion was so prevalent in France, and none passed more current among the admirers of French philosophy in Britain, as that the power of framing governments, and of administering them, ought to remain with persons of literary attainments; or, in other words, that those who can most easily and readily write books, are therefore best qualified to govern states. Whoever peruses the writings of the late ingenious Madame de Stael, will perceive that she (one of the most remarkable women certainly in her time) lived and died in the belief, that revolutions were to be effected, and countries governed by a proper succession of clever pamphlets. A nation which has long enjoyed the benefit of a free press, does not furnish so many believers in the omnipotence of literary talent. Men are aware that every case may be argued on both sides, and seldom render their assent to any proposition merely on account of the skill with which it is advocated or illustrated. The editor of this work was never one of those who

think that a good cause can suffer much by free discussion, and admits Mr. Bage's novels into the collection of British novelists, as works of talent and genius, though differing entirely both from his political and theological tenets. It is a kind of composition more adapted to confirm those who hold similar opinions with the author, by affording them a triumph at the expense of their opponents, than to convince those who may be disposed calmly to investigate the subject. They who are disposed to burn an obnoxious or unpopular person in effigy, care little how far his dress and external appearance are exaggerated; and, in the same way, it requires little address in an author, to draw broad caricatures of those whom he regards as foes, or to make specious and flattering representations of such as he considers as friends. They who look on the world with an impartial eye, will scarcely be of opinion, that Mr. Bage has seized the true features which distinguish either the upper or lower ranks. The highest and the lowest rank in society are each liable indeed to temptations, peculiarly their own, and their relative situation serves to illustrate the wisdom of the prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." But these peculiar propensities, we think, will in life be found considerably different from the attributes ascribed to the higher and lower classes by Mr. Bage. In most cases, this great man resembles the giant of the ancient romance of chivalry,

whose evil qualities were presumed from his superior stature, and who was to be tilted at and cut to pieces, merely because he stood a few inches higher than his fellow mortals. But the very vices and foibles of the higher classes are of a kind different from what Bage has frequently represented them. Men of rank, in the present day, are too indifferent, and too indolent, to indulge any of the stormy passions, and irregular, but vehement desires, which create the petty tyrant, and perhaps formerly animated the feudal oppressor. Their general fault is a want of energy, or, to speak more accurately, an apathy, which is scarcely disturbed even by the feverish risks to which they expose their fortune, for the sole purpose, so far as can be discerned, of enjoying some momentary excitation. Amongst the numbers, both of rank and talent, who lie stranded upon the shores of Spenser's Lake of Idleness, are many who only want sufficient motives for exertion, to attract at once esteem and admiration; and among those, whom we rather despise than pity, a selfish apathy is the predominating attribute.

In like manner, the habits of the lower classes are far from affording, exclusively, that rich fruit of virtue and generosity which Mr. Bage's writings would teach us to expect. On the contrary, they are discontented, not unnaturally, with the hardships of their situation, occupied too often in seizing upon the transient enjoyments which chance

throws in their way, and open to temptations which promise to mend their condition in life, at least to extend the circle of their pleasures at the expense of their morals.

Those, therefore, who weigh equally, will be disposed to think that the state of society most favourable to virtue, will be found amongst those who neither want nor abound, who are neither sufficiently raised above the necessity of labour and industry, to be satiated by the ready gratification of every wild wish, as it arises, or so much depressed below the general scale of society, as to be exasperated by struggles against indigence, or seduced by the violence of temptations which that indigence renders it difficult to resist.

Though we have thus endeavoured to draw a broad line of distinction between the vices proper to the conditions of the rich and the poor, the reader must be cautious to understand these words in a relative sense. For men are not rich or poor in relation to the general amount of their means, but in proportion to their wants and their wishes. He who can adjust his expenses within the limits of his income, how small soever that may be, must escape from the temptations which most easily beset indigence; and the rich man, who makes it his business, as it is his duty, to attend to the proper distribution of his wealth, shall be equally emanci-

pated from those to which opulence is peculiarly obnoxious.

This misrepresentation of the different classes in society is not the only speculative error in which Bage has indulged during these poetic narratives. There is in his novels a dangerous tendency to slacken the reins of discipline upon a point, where, perhaps, of all others, society must be benefited by their curbing restraint.

Fielding, Smollett, and other novelists, have, with very indifferent taste, brought forward their heroes as rakes and debauchees, and treated with great lightness those breaches of morals, which are too commonly considered as venial in the male sex; but Bage has extended, in some instances, that licence to females, and seems at times even to sport with the ties of marriage, which is at once the institution of civil society most favourable to religion and good order, and that which, in its consequences, forms the most marked distinction between man and the lower animals. All the influence which women enjoy in society—their right to the exercise of that maternal care which forms the first and most indelible species of education; the wholesome and mitigating restraint which they possess over the passions of mankind; their power of protecting us when young, and cheering us when old—depend so entirely upon their personal purity, and the charm which it casts around them, that, to insinuate a

doubt of its real value, is wilfully to remove the broadest corner-stone on which civil society rests, with all its benefits, and with all its comforts. It is true, we can easily conceive that a female like Miss Ross, in *Barham Downs*, may fall under the arts of a seducer, under circumstances so peculiar as to excite great compassion, nor are we so rigid as to say that such a person may not be restored to society, when her subsequent conduct shall have effaced recollection of her error. But she must return thither as an humble penitent, and has no title to sue out her pardon as a matter of right, and assume a place as if she had never fallen from her proper sphere. Her disgrace must not be considered as a trivial stain, which may be communicated by a husband, as an exceeding good jest, to his friend and correspondent; there must be, not penitence and reformation alone, but humiliation and abasement, in the recollection of her errors. This the laws of society demand even from the unfortunate; and, to compromise farther, would open a door to the most unbounded licentiousness. With this fault in principle is connected an indelicacy of expression frequently occurring in Bage's novels, but which, though a gross error in point of taste, we consider as a matter of much less consequence than the former.

Having adverted to this prominent error in Mr. Bage's theory of morals, we are compelled to remark



that his ideas respecting the male sex are not less inaccurate, considered as rules of mental government, than the over indulgence with which he seems to regard female frailty. Hermsprong, whom he produces as the ideal perfection of humanity, is paraded as a man, who, freed from all the nurse and all the priest has taught, steps forward on his path, without any religious or political restraint, as one who derives his own rules of conduct from his own breast, and avoids or resists all temptations of evil passions, because his reason teaches him that they are attended with evil consequences. In the expressive words of our moral poet, Wordsworth, he is

“A reasoning, self-sufficient thing,  
An intellectual all-in-all.”

But did such a man ever exist? Or are we, in the fair construction of humanity, with all its temptations, its passions, and its frailties, entitled to expect such perfection from the mere force of practical philosophy? Let each reader ask his own bosom, whether it were possible for him to hold an unaltered tenor of moral and virtuous conduct, did he suppose that to himself alone he was responsible, and that his own reason, a judge so peculiarly subject to be bribed, blinded, and imposed upon by the sophistry with which the human mind can gloss over those actions to which human passions so strongly impel us, was the ultimate judge of his actions? Let each

reader ask the question at his own conscience, and if he can honestly and conscientiously answer in the affirmative, he is either that faultless monster which the world never saw, or he deceives himself as grossly as the poor devotee, who, referring his course of conduct to the action of some supposed internal inspiration, conceives himself, upon a different ground, incapable of crime, even when he is in the very act of committing it.

We are not treating this subject theologically; the nature of our present work excludes such serious reasoning: but we would remind, even in these slight sketches, those who stand up for the self-sufficient morality of modern philosophy, or rather sophistry, that the experiment has long since been tried on a large scale. Whatever may be the inferiority of the ancients in physical science, it will scarce be denied, that in moral science they possessed all the lights which the unassisted reason, that is now referred to as the sufficient light of our paths, could possibly attain. Yet, when we survey what their system of ethics did for the perfection of the human species, we will see that but a very few even of the teachers themselves have left behind them such characters as tend to do honour to their doctrines. Some philosophers there were, who, as instructors in morality, showed a laudable example to their followers; and we will not invidiously inquire how far these were supported in their self-

denial, either by vanity, or the desire of preserving consistency, or the importance annexed to the founder of a sect; although the least of these motives afford great support to temperance, even in cases where it is not rendered easy by advanced age, which of itself calms the more stormy passions. But the satires of Juvenal, of Petronius, and, above all, Lucian, show what slight effect the doctrines of Zeno, Epictetus, Plato, Socrates, and Epicurus, produced on their avowed followers, and how little influence the beard of the stoic, the sophistry of the academician, and the self-denied mortification of the cynics, had upon the sects which derived their names from these distinguished philosophers. We will find that these pretended despisers of sensual pleasure shared the worst vices of the grossest age of society, and added to them the detestable hypocrisy of pretending, that they were all the while guided by the laws of true wisdom and of right reason.

If, in modern times, they who owned the restraint of philosophical discipline alone have not given way to such gross laxity of conduct, it is because those principles of religion, which they affect to despise, have impressed on the public mind a system of moral feeling unknown till the general prevalence of the christian religion; but which, since its predominance, has so generally pervaded European society, that no pretender to innovation can directly disavow its influence, though he endeavours to show

that the same results which are recommended from the Christian pulpit, and practised by the Christian community, might be reached by the unassisted efforts of that human reason to which he counsels us to resign the sole regulation of our morals.

In short, to oppose one authority in the same department to another, the reader is requested to compare the character of the philosophic Square in Tom Jones, with that of Bage's philosophical heroes; and to consider seriously, whether a system of ethics, founding an exclusive and paramount court in a man's own bosom for the regulation of his own conduct, is likely to form a noble enlightened, and generous character, influencing others by superior energy and faultless example; or whether it is not more likely, as in the observer of the rule of right, to regulate morals according to temptation and to convenience, and to form a selfish, sophistical hypocrite, who, with morality always in his mouth, finds a perpetual apology for evading the practice of abstinence, when either passion or interest solicit him to indulgence.

We do not mean to say that, because Bage entertained erroneous notions, he therefore acted viciously. The history of his life, so far as known to us, indicates a contrary course of conduct. It would seem, from his language, as we have already said, that he had been bred among the strict and benevolent sect of friends, and if their doctrines carried him

some length in speculative error, he certainly could derive nothing from them to favour laxity of morals. In his fictitious works, the quakers are always brought forward in an amiable point of view ; and the characters of Arnold, and particularly of Miss Carlile, are admirable pictures of the union of talent, and even wit, with the peculiar manners and sentiments of these interesting and primitive persons. But, if not vicious himself, Bage's leading principles are such as, if acted upon, would introduce vice into society ; in men of a fiercer mould, they would lead to a very different line of conduct from his own ; and, such being the case, it was the editor's duty to point out the sophistry on which they are founded.

The works of Bage, abstracted from the views which we have endeavoured to point out, are of high and decided merit. It is scarce possible to read him without being amused, and, to a certain degree, instructed. His whole efforts are turned to the development of human character ; and, it must be owned, he possessed a ready key to it. The mere story of the novels seldom possesses much interest—it is the conduct of his personages, as thinking and speaking beings, in which we are interested ; and, contrary to the general case, the reader is seldom or never tempted to pass over the dialogue in order to continue the narrative. The author deals occasionally in quick and improbable

conversions, as in that of Sir George Osmond, from selfishness and avarice, to generosity and liberality, by the mere loveliness of virtue in his brother and his friends. And he does not appear to have possessed much knowledge of that species of character which is formed by profession or by nationality. His 'seamen are indifferent; his Irishmen not beyond those usually brought on the stage; his Scotchmen still more awkward caricatures, and the language which he puts in their mouths, not similar to any that has been spoken since the days of Babel. It is in detecting the internal working of a powerful understanding, like that of Paracelsus Holman, that Bage's power chiefly consists; and great that power must be, considering how much more difficult it is to trace those varieties of character which are formed by such working, than merely to point out such as the mind receives from the manners and customs of the country in which it has ripened.

A light, gay, pleasing air, carries us agreeably through Bage's novels, and when we are disposed to be angry at seeing the worse made to appear the better reason, we are reconciled to the author by the ease and good humour of his style. We did not think it proper to reject the works of so eminent an author from the collection of the British Novelists, merely on account of speculative errors. We have done our best to place a mark on these; and, as we are far from being of opinion, that the

youngest and most thoughtless derive their serious opinions from works of this nature, we leave them for our reader's amusement, trusting that he will remember that a good jest is no argument ; that a novelist, like the master of a puppet-show, has his drama under his absolute authority ; and that whether the devil flies away with Punch, or Punch strangles the devil, forms no real argument as to the comparative power of either one or other, but only indicates the special pleasure of the master of the motion.

## **RICHARD CUMBERLAND.**

**THIS** author, distinguished in the 18th century, survived till the present was considerably advanced, interesting to the public, as well as to private society, not only on account of his own claims to distinction, but as the last of that constellation of genius which the predominating spirit of Johnson had assembled about him, and in which he presided a stern Aristarchus. Cumberland's character and writings are associated with those of Goldsmith, of Burke, of Percy, of Reynolds, names which sound in our ears as those of English Classics. He was his own biographer; and from his own memoirs we are enabled to trace a brief sketch of his life and labours, as also of his temper and character; on which latter subjects we have the evidence of contemporaries, and perhaps, some recollections of our own.

Richard Cumberland boasted himself, with honest pride, the descendant of parents respectable for their station, eminent in learning, and no less for worth and piety. The celebrated Richard Bentley was his maternal grandfather, a name dreaded as well as respected in literature, and which his descendant, on several occasions, protected with filial



respect against those who continued over his grave the insults which he had received from the wits of Queen Anne's reign. This eminent scholar had one son, the well-known author of *The Wishes*, and two daughters. The second, Joanna, the Phœbe of Byrom's pastoral, married Denison Cumberland, son of an arch-deacon, and grandson of Richard Cumberland, bishop of Peterborough. Though possessed of some independence, he became rector of Stanwick, at the instance of his father-in-law, Dr. Bentley, and in course of time, bishop of Clonfert, and was afterwards translated to the see of Kilmore.

Richard Cumberland, the subject of this memoir, was the second child of this marriage, the eldest being Joanna, a daughter. He was born on the 19th of February, 1732 ; and, as he naturally delights to record with precision, in an apartment called the judge's chamber, of the master's lodge of Trinity College, then occupied by his celebrated maternal grandfather—*inter sylvas academi*. With equal minuteness the grandson of the learned Bentley goes through the course of his earlier studies, and registers his progress under Kinsman of St. Edmondsbury, afterwards at Westminster, and finally at Cambridge ; in all which seminaries of classical erudition, he highly distinguished himself. At college, he endangered his health by the severity with which he followed his studies, obtained his bachelor's degree with honour, and passed with triumph a

peculiarly difficult examination ; the result of which was his being elected to a fellowship.

Amid his classical pursuits, the cultivation of English letters was not neglected, and Cumberland became the author of many poems of considerable merit. It may be observed, however, that he seldom seems to have struck out an original path for himself, but rather wrote because others had written successfully, and in the manner of which they had set an example, than from the strong impulse of that inward fire, which makes or forces a way for its own coruscations, without respect to the paths of others. Thus Cumberland wrote an elegy in a church-yard on Saint Mark's Eve, because Gray had written an elegy in a country church-yard. He wrote a drama on the subject of Elfrida, and with a chorus, in imitation of Mason ; he imitated Hammond, and he imitated Spenser, and seems to display a mind full of information and activity, abounding with the natural desire of distinction, but which had not yet attained sufficient confidence in its own resources, a fault from which none of his compositions are perhaps entirely free.

Mr. Cumberland's original destiny was to have walked the respectable and retired path by which his ancestors had ascended to church dignity ; and there is every reason to believe that, as he was their equal in worth and learning, his success in life might have been the same as theirs. But a tempta-

tion, difficult to be resisted, turned him from the study of divinity to that of politics.

The Rev. Mr. Cumberland, father of the poet, had it in his power to render some important services to the Marquis of Halifax, then distinguished as a public character; and in recompense or acknowledgement of this, young Richard was withdrawn from the groves of Cam, and the tranquil pursuit of a learned profession, to attend the noble lord in the advantageous and confidential situation of private secretary. Amidst much circumlocution and moral reflection, which Cumberland bestows on this promotion and change of pursuit, the reader may fairly infer, that though he discharged with regularity the ostensible duties of his office, it was not suited to him; nor did he give the full satisfaction that perhaps he might have done, had a raw academician, his head full, as he says, of Greek and Latin, and little acquainted with the affairs of the existing world, been in the first place introduced for a time to busy life as a spectator, ere called to take an active part in it as a duty. His situation, however, introduced him to the best society, and insured liberal favour and patronage (so far as praise and recommendation went), to the efforts of his muse. In particular, his connection with Lord Halifax introduced our author to Bubb Doddington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, of Diary memory, who

affected the character of Mécænas, and was in reality an accomplished man.

It was under the joint auspices of Lords Halifax and Melcombe, that Cumberland executed what he has entitled his first legitimate drama, *The Banishment of Cicero*—an unhappy subject, which is not redeemed by much powerful writing. This tragedy was recommended to Garrick by the two noble patrons of Cumberland; but, in despite of his deference for great names and high authorities, the manager would not venture on so unpromising a subject of representation. *The Banishment of Cicero* was published by the author, who frankly admits, that in doing so he printed Garrick's vindication.

About this time, as an earnest of future favours, Cumberland obtained, through the influence of Lord Halifax, the office of Crown-Agent for the province of Nova Scotia, and conceived his fortune sufficiently advanced in the world, to settle himself by marriage. In 1759, therefore, he united himself to Elizabeth, only daughter of George Ridge, of Kilmerton, by Miss Brooke, a niece of Cumberland's grandfather, Bentley. Mrs. Cumberland was accomplished and beautiful, and the path of promotion appeared to brighten before the happy bridegroom.

Lord Bute's star was now fast rising in the political horizon, and both the Marquis of Halifax and the versatile Bubb Doddington had determined to

worship the influence of this short-lived luminary. The latter obtained a British Peerage, a barren honour, which only entitled him to walk in the procession at the coronation, and the former had the Lieutenancy of Ireland. The celebrated Single Speech Hamilton, held the post of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, while Cumberland, not to his perfect content, was obliged to confine himself to the secondary department of Ulster Secretary. There was wisdom, perhaps, in the selection, though it would have been unreasonable to expect the disappointed private secretary to concur in that opinion. No one ever doubted the acute political and practical talents of William Gerard Hamilton, while Cumberland possessed, perhaps, too much of the poetical temperament to rival him as a man of business. A vivid imagination, eager on its own schemes, and unapt to be stirred by matter of duller import; a sanguine temper, to which hopes too often seem as certainties, joined to a certain portion both of self-opinion, and self-will, although they are delightful, considered as the attributes of an intimate friend, are inconvenient ingredients in the character of a dependant, whose duty lies in the paths of ordinary business.

Cumberland, however, rendered his principal some effectual service, even in the most worldly application of the phrase—he discovered a number of lapsed patents, the renewal of which the Lord

Lientenant found a convenient fund of influence. But the Ulster Secretary had no other reward than the empty offer of a baronetcy, which he wisely declined. He was gratified, however, though less directly, by the promotion of his father to the see of Clonfert in Ireland. The new prelate shifted his residence to that kingdom, where his son, with pious duty, spent some considerable part of every year in attendance on him during his life.

Lord Halifax, on his return to England, obtained the Seals of Secretary of State, and Cumberland, a candidate for the office of Under Secretary, received the cold answer from his patron, that "he was not fit for every situation;" a reason scarce rendered more palatable by the special addition, that he did not possess the necessary fluency in the French tongue. Sedgewick, the successful competitor, vacated a situation at the Board of Trade, called Clerk of Reports, and Cumberland became desirous to hold it in his room. As this was in the gift of Lord Hillsborough, the proposal to apply for it was in a manner withdrawing from the patronage of Lord Halifax, who seems to have considered it as such, and there ensued some coldness betwixt the Minister and his late Private Secretary. On looking at these events, we can see that Cumberland was probably no good man of business, as it is called, certainly no good courtier; for, holding such a confidential situation with Lord Halifax,

he must otherwise have rendered himself either too useful, or too agreeable, to be easily parted with.

An attempt of Cumberland's to fill up the poetical part of an English opera, incurred the jealousy of Bickerstaff, the author of *Love in a Village*, then in possession of that department of dramatic composition. The piece, called *The Summer's Tale*, succeeded in such a degree as induced the rival writer to vent his indignation in every species of abuse against the author and the drama. In a much better spirit, Cumberland ascribed Bickerstaff's hostility to an anxious apprehension for his interest, and generously intimated his intention to interfere no farther with him as a writer of operas. The dispute led to important consequences; for Smith, well known by the deserved appellation of Gentleman Smith, then of Covent Garden, turned the author's dramatic genius into a better channel, by strongly recommending to him to attempt the legitimate drama. By this encouragement, Mr. Cumberland was induced to commence his dramatic career, which he often pursued with success, and almost always with such indefatigable industry as has no parallel in our theatrical history.

*The Brothers* was the first fruit of this ample harvest. It was received with applause, and is still on the stock-list of acting plays. The sudden assumption of spirit by Sir Benjamin Dove, like Luke's change from servility to insolence, is one of those

incidents which always tell well upon the spectator. The author acknowledges his obligation to Fletcher's *Little French Lawyer*, but the comedy is brought to bear on a point so different, that little is in this instance detracted from its merit.

But the *West Indian*, which succeeded in the following year, raised its author much higher in the class of dramatic writers of the period, and—had Sheridan not been—must have placed Cumberland decidedly at the head of the list. It is a classical comedy; the dialogue spirited and elegant; the characters well conceived, and presenting bold features, though still within the line of probability; and the plot regularly conducted, and happily extricated. The character of Major O'Flaherty, which those who have seen it represented by Irish Johnstone, will always consider as one of the most efficient in the British Drama, may have had the additional merit of suggesting that of Sir Lucius O'Trigger; but the latter is a companion, not a copy, of Cumberland's portrait.

Garrick, reconciled with the author by a happy touch of praise, in the prologue to the *Brothers*, contributed an epilogue, and Tom King supported the character of Belcour, with that elastic energy, which gave reality to all the freaks of a child of the sun, whose benevolence seems as instinctive as his passions.

The *Fashionable Lover*, which followed the *West*



*Indian*, was an addition to Cumberland's reputation. There was the same elegance of dialogue, but much less of the *vis comica*. The scenes hang heavy on the stage, and the character of Colin M'Leod, the honest Scotch servant, not being drawn from nature, has little, excepting tameness, to distinguish it from the Gibbies and Sawneys which had hitherto possession of the stage, as the popular representatives of the Scottish nation. The author himself is, doubtless, of a different opinion, and labours hard to place his *Fashionable Lovers* by the side of the *West Indian*, in point of merit; but the critic cannot avoid assenting to the judgment of the audience. The *Cholerick Man* was next acted, and was well received, though now forgotten; and other dramatic sketches, of minor importance, were given by Cumberland to the public, before the production of his *Battle of Hastings*, a tragedy, in which the language, often uncommonly striking, has more merit than the characters or the plot. The latter has the inconvenient fault of being inconsistent with history, which at once affords a hold to every critic of the most ordinary degree of information. It was successful, however, Henderson performing the principal character. Bickerstaff being off the stage, our author also wrote *Calypso*, and another opera, with the view of serving a meritorious young composer, named Butler.

Neither did these dramatic labours entirely occu-

py his time. He found leisure to defend the memory of his grandfather, Bentley, in a controversy with Lowth, and to plead the cause of the unhappy Daniel Perreau, over whose fate hangs a veil so mysterious, by drawing up his address to the jury.

The satisfaction which the author must have derived from the success of his various dramatic labours, seems to have been in some degree embittered by the criticisms to which all authors, but especially those who write for the theatre, are exposed. He acknowledges that he gave too much attention to the calumnies and abuse of the public press, and tells us, that Garrick used to call him the man without a skin. Unquestionably, toughness of hide is necessary on such occasions; but, on the whole, it will be found that they who give least attention to such poisoned arrows, experience least pain from their venom.

There was, indeed, in Cumberland's situation, enough to console him for greater mortifications, than malevolent criticism ought to have had power to inflict. He was happy in his family, consisting of four sons and two daughters. All the former entered the king's service; the first and third as soldiers, the second and fourth in the navy. Besides these domestic blessings, Cumberland stood in the first ranks of literature, and, as a matter of course, in the first ranks in society, to which, in England, literature is a ready passport. His habits and man-

ners qualified him for enjoying this distinguished situation, and his fortune, including the profits of his office, and his literary revenues, seem not to have been inadequate to his maintaining his ground. It was shortly after improved by Lord George Germain, afterwards Lord Sackville, who promoted him in the handsomest manner to the situation of Secretary to the Board of Trade, at which he had hitherto held a subordinate situation. A distant relation also, Decimus Reynolds, constituted Mr. Cumberland heir to a considerable property, and placed his will in the hands of his intended successor, in order that he might not be tempted to alter it at a future period. Cumberland was too honourably minded to accept of it, otherwise than as a deposit to be called back at the testator's pleasure. After the course of several years, Mr. Reynolds resumed it accordingly. Another remarkable disappointment had in the meanwhile befallen, which, while it closed his further progress in political life, gave a blow to his private fortune, which it never seems to have recovered, and, in the author's own words, "very strongly contrasted and changed the complexion of his latter days from that of the preceding ones."

In the year 1780, hopes were entertained of detaching Spain from the hostile confederacy by which Great Britain was all but overwhelmed. That kingdom could not but dread the example held out

by the North Americans to their own colonies. It was supposed possible to open a negotiation with the minister, Florida Blanca, and Richard Cumberland was the agent privately entrusted with conducting this political intrigue. He was to proceed in a frigate to Lisbon, under pretence of a voyage for health or pleasure; and either to go on to Madrid, or to return to Britain, as he should be advised after communicating with the Abbé Hussey, Chaplain to his Catholic Majesty, the secret agent in this important affair. Mrs. Cumberland and her daughters accompanied him on this expedition. On the voyage, the envoy had an opportunity, precious to an author and dramatist, of seeing British courage displayed on its own proper element, by an action betwixt the *Milford* and a French frigate, in which the latter was captured. He celebrated this action in a very spirited sea-song, which we remember popular some years afterwards.

There was one point of the utmost consequence in the proposed treaty, which always has been so in negotiations with Spain, and which will again be so whenever she shall regain her place in the European republic. This point respects Gibraltar. There is little doubt that the temptation of recovering this important fortress was the bait which drew the Spanish nation into the American war; and could this point have been ceded, the Family Compact would not have opposed any insurmountable ob-

stacle to a separate peace with England. But the hearts of the English people were as unalterably fixed on retaining this badge of conquest as that of Spain upon regaining it; and, in truth, its surrender must have been generally regarded, at home and abroad, as a dereliction of national honour, and a confession of national weakness. Mr. Cumberland was, therefore, instructed not to proceed to Madrid until he should learn from the Abbé Hussey whether the cession of this important fortress was, or was not, to be made, on the part of Spain, the basis of the proposed negotiation. In the former event, the secret envoy of England was not to advance to Madrid; but, on the contrary, to return to Britain. It was to ascertain this point that Hussey went to Madrid; but unhappily his letters to Cumberland, while they encouraged him to try the event of a negotiation, gave him no assurances whatever upon the point by which his motions were to be regulated. Walpole, the British minister at Lisbon, seems to have seen through the Abbé's duplicity, who was desirous, perhaps on his own account, that the negotiation should not be broken off; and he advised Cumberland to conform implicitly to his instructions, and either return home, or at least not to leave Lisbon without fresh orders from England. Unluckily, Mr. Cumberland had adopted the idea that delay would be fatal to the success of the treaty, and, sanguine respecting

the peaceful dispositions of the Spanish ministry, and confident in the integrity of Hussey, he resolved to proceed to Madrid upon his own responsibility—a temerity against which the event ought to warn all political agents.

The following paragraph of a letter to Lord Hillsborough, shows Mr. Cumberland's sense of the risk which he thought it his duty to incur :—

“ I am sensible I have taken a step which exposes me to censure upon failure of success, unless the reasons on which I have acted be weighed with candour, and even with indulgence. In the decision I have taken for entering Spain, I have had no other object but to keep alive a treaty to which any backwardness or evasion on my part would, I am persuaded, be immediate extinction. I know where my danger lies ; but as my endeavours for the public service, and the honour of your administration, are sincere, I have no doubt that I shall obtain your protection.”

From this quotation, to which others might be added, it is evident that, even in Cumberland's own eyes, nothing but his success could entirely vindicate him from the charge of officious temerity ; and the events which were in the mean time occurring in London, removed this chance to an incalculable distance. When he arrived at Madrid, he found Florida Blanca in full possession of the whole history of the mob termed Lord George Gordon's,

and, like foreigners on all such occasions, bent to perceive in the explosion of a popular tumult the downfall of the British monarchy and ministry.\* A negotiation, of a delicate nature, at any rate, and opened under such auspices, could hardly be expected to prosper, although Mr. Cumberland did his best to keep it alive. Under a reluctant permission of the British ministry, rather extorted than granted, the envoy resided about twelve months in Madrid, trying earnestly to knit the bonds of amity between ministers, who seem to have had little serious hope or intention of pacification, until at length Cumberland's return was commanded in express terms, on the 18th January, 1781. This was upon the very ground of the cession of Gibraltar. According to Cumberland, the Spaniards only wanted to talk on this subject; and if he had been permitted to have given accommodation in a matter of mere punctilio, the object of a separate treaty might have been accomplished. To this sanguine statement we can give no credit. Spain was, at this very moment, employed in actively combining the whole strength of her kingdom for the recovery of this fortress, with which she naturally esteemed her national honour peculiarly connected. She was bribed by the promise of the most active and powerful assistance from France, and it is very

\* Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 18.

improbable that they would have sacrificed the high hopes which they entertained of carrying this important place by force of arms, in exchange for any thing short of its specific surrender.

Still, however, as Mr. Cumberland acted with the most perfect good faith, and with a zeal, the fault of which was only its excess, the reader can scarce be prepared by our account of his errors, for the unworthy treatment to which he was subjected. Our author affirms, and we must presume with perfect accuracy, that when he set out upon this mission, besides receiving a thousand pounds in hand, he had assurance from the secretary of the treasury, that all bills drawn by Mr. Cumberland on his own bank, should be instantly replaced from the treasury; and he states, that, notwithstanding this positive pledge, accompanied by the naming a very large sum, as placed at his discretion, no one penny was ever so replaced by government; and that he was obliged to repay from his private fortune, to a ruinous extent, the bankers who had advanced money on his private credit; for which, by no species of appeal or application, was he ever able to obtain reimbursement.

Whatever may be thought of Mr. Cumberland's political prudence in venturing beyond his commission, or of his sanguine disposition, which continued to hope a favourable issue to a desperate negotiation, there can be no doubt that he was suf-



ferred to remain at Madrid, a British agent, recognized as such by the ministry, in constant correspondence with the Secretary of State, and receiving from him directions respecting his residence at, or departure from, Madrid. There seems, therefore, to have been neither justice nor humanity in refusing the payment of his drafts, and subjecting him to such wants and difficulties, that, after having declined the liberal offer of the Spanish monarch to defray his expenses, the British agent was only extricated from the situation of a penniless bankrupt, by the compassion of a private friend, who advanced him a seasonable loan of five hundred pounds. The state of the balance due to him was indeed considerable, being no less than four thousand five hundred pounds. And it may be thought, that, as Mr. Cumberland's situation was ostensibly that of a private gentleman, travelling for health, much expense could not, at least ought not, to have attended his establishment. But his wife and daughters were in family with him; and we must allow for domestic comfort, and even some sort of splendour, in an individual, who was to hold communication with the principal servants of the Spanish crown. Besides he had been promised an ample allowance for secret service money, out of a sum placed at his own discretion. The truth seems to be, that Lord North's administration thought a thousand pounds was enough to have lost on an unsuccessful nego-

tiation; and as Cumberland had certainly made himself in some degree responsible for the event, the same ministers, who, doubtless, would have had no objection to avow the issue of his intrigues, had they been successful, chose, in the contrary event, to disown them.

To encounter the unexpected losses to which he was thus subjected, Mr. Cumberland was under the necessity of parting with his paternal property at an unfavourable season, and when its value could not be obtained. Shortly after followed the dissolution of the Board of Trade, and the situation of Secretary fell under Burke's economical pruning knife, a compensation amounting only to one half the value being appointed to the holder. Thus unpleasantly relieved from official and political duties, Mr. Cumberland adopted the prudent resolution of relinquishing his town residence, and settling himself and his family at Farnbridge, where he continued to live in retirement, yet not without the exercise of an elegant hospitality, till the final close of his long life.

The *Anecdotes of eminent Painters in Spain*, in two volumes, together with a catalogue of the pictures which adorn the Escorial, suffered to be made by the king of Spain's express permission, were the principal fruits of our author's visit to the continent. Yet we ought to except the very pretty story of Nicolas Pedrosa, an excellent imitation of

Le Sage, which appeared in the *Connoisseur*, a periodical paper, which Cumberland edited with considerable success. It was one of the literary enterprises in which the author, from his acquaintance with men and manners, as well as his taste and learning, was well qualified to excel, and the work continues to afford amusement both to the general reader and the scholar. The latter is deeply interested in the curious and classical account which the *Connoisseur* contains of the early Greek drama. In this department, Cumberland has acknowledged his debts to the celebrated Bentley, his grandfather, and to his less known, but scarce less ingenious relation, Richard Bentley, son of the celebrated scholar, and author of the comedy or farce termed *The Wishes*. The aid of the former was derived from the notes which Cumberland possessed, but that of Richard Bentley was more direct.

This learned and ingenious, but rather eccentric person, was the friend of Horace Walpole, who, as his nephew Cumberland complains with some justice, exercised the rights of patronage rather unmercifully. The humour of *The Wishes* was such as could scarcely be understood by a vulgar audience, for much of it turned on the absurd structure of the ancient drama, and the peculiar stoicism with which the chorus, supposed to be spectators of the scene, deduce moral lessons of the justice of the gods, from the atrocities which the action exhibits, but never

stir a finger to interfere or to prevent them. In ridicule of this absurdity, the chorus in *The Wishes* are informed that a madman has just broken his way into the cellars, with a torch in his hand, to set fire to a magazine of gunpowder; on which, instead of using any means of prevention or escape, they began, in strophe and antistrophe, to lament their own condition, and exclaim against the thrice unhappy madman—or rather the thrice unhappy friends of the madman, who had not taken measures of securing him—or rather upon the six times unhappy fate of themselves, thus exposed to the madman's fury. All this is a good jest to those who remember the stoicism with which the choruses of *Æschylus* and *Euripides* view and comment upon the horrors which they witness on the stage, but it might have been esteemed caviare to the British audience in general; yet the entertainment was well received until the extravagant incident of hanging *Harlequin* on the stage. The author was so sensible of the absurdity of this exhibition, that he whispered to his nephew, *Cumberland*, during the representation—"If they do not damn this they deserve to be d—d themselves;" and, as he spoke, the condemnation of the piece was complete. It is much to be wished that this singular performance were given to the public in print.—The notice of *Richard Bentley* has led us something from our purpose, which only called on us to remark, that he furnished

Cumberland with those splendid translations from the Greek dramatists which adorn the *Connoisseur*. The author however claims for himself the praise due to a version of the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, afterwards incorporated with this periodical work.

The modern characters introduced by Cumberland in his *Connoisseur*, were his own; and that of the benevolent Israelite, Abraham Abrahams, was, he informs us, written upon principle, in behalf of a persecuted race. He followed up this kind-intention in a popular comedy, entitled, "The Jew." The dramatic character of Sheva, combining the extremes of habitual parsimony and native philanthropy, was written in the same spirit of benevolence as that of Abrahams, and was excellently performed by Jack Bannister. The public prints gave the Jews credit for acknowledging their gratitude in a very substantial form. The author, in his memoirs, does not disguise his wish, that they had flattered him with some token of the debt which he conceives them to have owed. We think, however, that a prior token of regard should have been bestowed on the author of *Joshua*, in the tale of *Count Fathom*, and, moreover, we cannot be surprised that the people in question felt a portrait in which they were made ludicrous as well as interesting, to be something between an affront and a compliment. Few of the better class of the Jewish persuasion would, we believe, be disposed to admit either

Abraham or Sheva as fitting representatives of their tribe.

In his retreat at Tunbridge, labouring in the bosom of his family, and making their common sitting room his place of study, Cumberland continued to compose a number of dramatic pieces, of which he himself seems almost to have forgotten the names, and of which a modern reader can trace very few. Several were successful, several unfortunate; many never performed at all; but the spirit of the author continued unwearied and undismayed. *The Arab*, *The Walloons*, and many other plays, are forgotten; but the character of Penruddock, in the *Wheel of Fortune*, well conceived in itself, and admirably supported by Kemble, and since by Charles Young, continues to command attention and applause. *The Carmelite*, a tragedy, on the regular tragic plan, attracted much attention, as the inimitable Siddons played the part of the lady of Saint Valois, and Kemble that of Montgomeri. The plot, however, had that fault which, after all, clings to many of Cumberland's pieces—there was a want of originality. The spectator or reader was by the story irresistibly reminded of *Douglas*, and there was more taste than genius in the dialogue. The language was better than the sentiments; but the grace of the one could not always disguise that the other wanted novelty. *The Brothers*, *The West Indian*, and *The Wheel of*

*Fortune*, stand high in the list of acting plays, and we are assured; by a very competent judge; that *First Love*, which we have not ourselves lately seen, is an excellent comedy, and maintains possession of the stage. The drama must have been Cumberland's favourite style of composition, for he went on shooting shaft after shaft at the mark, which he did not always hit, and often effacing by failures the memory of triumphant successes. His plays at last amounted to upwards of fifty, and intercession and flattery were sometimes necessary to force their way to the stage. On these occasions, the Green-room traditions avow that the veteran bard did not hesitate to bestow the most copious praises on the company who were to bring forward a new piece, at the expense of their rivals of the other house, who had his tribute of commendation in their turn, when their acceptance of a play put them in his good graces. It was also said, that when many of the dramatic authors united in a complaint to the Lord Chancellor, against the late Mr. Sheridan, then manager of Drury-lane, he prevented Cumberland from joining the confederacy, by offering to bring out any manuscript play which he should select for performance. But selection was not an easy task to an author to whom all the offspring of his genius were equally dear. After much nervous hesitation, he trusted the chance to fortune; and out of a dozen of manuscript plays which lay by him,

is said to have reached the manager the first which came to hand, without reading the title. Yet if Cumberland had the fondness of an author for his own productions, it must be owned he had also the fortitude to submit without murmuring, to the decision of the public. "I have had my full share of success, and I trust I have paid my tax for it," he says, good humouredly, "always without mutiny, and very generally without murmuring. I have never irritated the town by making a sturdy stand against their opposition, when they have been pleased to point it against any one of my productions. I never failed to withdraw myself on the very first intimation that I was unwelcome; and the only offence that I have been guilty of, is, that I have not always thought the worse of a composition, only because the public did not think well of it."\*

The Sacred Muse shared with her dramatic sisters in Cumberland's worship. In his poem of *Calvary*, he treated of a subject which, notwithstanding Klopstock's success, may be termed too lofty and too awful to be the subject of verse. He also wrote, in a literary partnership with Sir James Bland Burgess (well known as the author of *Richard-Cœur-de-Lion*, and other compositions), *The Exodiad*, an epic poem, founded on sacred history. By *Calvary* the author sustained the inconvenient

\* *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 269.



loss of a hundred pounds, and the *Exodiad* did not prove generally successful.

The author also undertook the task of compiling his own Memoirs; and the well-known Mr. Richard Sharpe, equally beloved for his virtues, and admired for the extent of his information, and the grace with which he communicates it, by encouraging Mr. Cumberland to become his own biographer, has performed a most acceptable service to the public. It is indeed one of the author's most pleasing works, and conveys a very accurate idea of his own talents, feelings, and character, with many powerful sketches of the age which has passed away. It is impossible to read without deep interest, Cumberland's account of the theatre in Goodman's fields, where Garrick, in the flower of his youth, and all the energy of genius, bounded on the stage as Lothario, and pointed out to ridicule the wittol husband, and the heavy paced Horatio; while in the last character, Mr. Quin, contrasting the old with the modern dramatic manner, surly, and solemn, in a dark-green coat, profusely embroidered, an enormous periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes, mouthed out his heroics in a deep, full, unvaried tone of declamation, accompanied by a kind of sawing action, which had more of the senate than the stage. Several characters of distinguished individuals are also drawn in the Me-

moirs with much force ; particularly those of Doddington, Lord Halifax, Lord Sackville, George Selwyn, and others of the past age. There are some traits of satire and ridicule, which are perhaps a little overcharged. This work was to have remained in manuscript until the author's death, when certainly such a publication appears with a better grace than while the auto-biographer still treads the stage. But Mr. Cumberland, notwithstanding his indefatigable labours, had never been in easy circumstances since his unlucky negotiation in Spain ; and in the work itself, he makes the affecting confession, that circumstances, paramount to prudence and propriety, urged him to anticipate the date of publication. The Memoirs were bought by Lackington's house for 500*l.* and passed speedily from a quarto to an octavo shape.

We have yet to mention another undertaking of this unwearied author, at a period of life advanced beyond the ordinary date of humanity. The *Edinburgh Review* was now in possession of a full tide of popularity, and the *Quarterly Review* was just commenced, or about to commence, when Mr. Cumberland undertook the conduct of a critical work, which he entitled the *London Review*, on an entirely new plan, inasmuch, as each article was to be published with the author's name annexed. He was supported by assistants of very considerable talents,

but, after two or three numbers, the scheme became abortive. In fact, though the plan contained an appearance of more boldness and fairness than the ordinary scheme of anonymous criticism, yet it involved certain inconveniences, which its author did not foresee. It is true, that no one believes that, because the imposing personal plural *We* is adopted, it therefore warrants our supposing, that the various pieces in a work of periodical criticism, are subjected to the revisal of a board of literary judges, and that each article is the production of their joint wisdom. Still, however, the use of the first person plural is so far legitimate, that in every well-governed publication of the kind, the articles by whomsoever written, are, at least, revised by the competent person selected as editor, which affords a better warrant to the public for candour and caution, than if each were to rest on the separate responsibility of the individual writer. It is even more important to remark, that the anonymous character of periodical criticism has a tendency to give freedom to literary discussion, and, at the same time, to soften the animosities to which it might otherwise give rise; and, in that respect, the peculiar language which members of the senate hold towards each other, and which is for that reason called parliamentary, resembles the ordinary style of critical discussion. An author who is severely criticised in a Review, can hardly be entitled, in the ordinary

case, to take notice of it otherwise than as a literary question ; whereas a direct and immediate collision, with a particular individual, seems to tend either, on the one hand, to limit the freedom of criticism, by placing it under the regulation of a timid complaisance, or, on the other, to render it (which is, to say the least, needless) of a fiercer and more personal cast, and thereby endanger the decorum, and perhaps the peace of society. Besides this, there will always be a greater authority ascribed by the generality of readers to the oracular opinion issued from the cloudy sanctuary of an invisible body, than to the mere *dictum* of a man with a Christian name and surname, which do not sound much better than those of the author over whom he predominates. In the far-famed Secret Tribunal of Germany, it was the invisibility of the judges which gave them all their awful jurisdiction.

So numerous were Cumberland's publications, that, having hurried through the greater part of them, we have yet to mention his novels, though it is as a writer of fictitious history he is here introduced. They were three in number, *Arundel*, *Henry*, and *John de Lancaster*. The first two were deservedly well received by the public ; the last was a labour of old age, and was less fortunate. It would be altogether unfair to dwell upon it, as forming a part of those productions on which the author's literary reputation must permanently rest.

*Arundel*, the first of these novels, was hastily written during the residence of a few weeks at Brighthelmstone, and sent to the press by detached parcels. It showed, at the first glance, what is seldom to be found in novels, the certainty that the author had been well acquainted with schools, with courts, and with fashionable life, and knew the topics on which he was employing his pen. The style, also, was easy and clear, and the characters boldly and firmly sketched. Cumberland, in describing *Arundel's* feelings at exchanging his college society, and the pursuits of learning, to become secretary to the Earl of G., unquestionably remembered the alteration of his own destination in early life. But there is no reason to think that in the darker shades of the Earl of G., he had any intention to satirize his patron, the Earl of Halifax, whom he paints in his *Memoirs* in much more agreeable colours.

The success which this work obtained, without labour, induced the author to write *Henry*, on which he bestowed his utmost attention. He formed it upon Fielding's model, and employed two years in polishing and correcting the style. Perhaps it does not, after all, claim such great precedence over *Arundel*, as the labour of the author induced him to aspire to. Yet it would be unjust to deny *Henry* the praise of an excellent novel. There is much beauty of description, and considerable display of

acquaintance with English life in the lower ranks ; indeed, Cumberland's clowns, sketched from his favourite Men of Kent, amongst whom he spent his life, may be placed by the side of similar portraits, by the first masters.

Above all, the character of Ezekiel Daw, though the outline must have been suggested by that of Abraham Adams, is so well distinguished by original and spirited conception, that it may pass for an excellent original. The Methodists, as they abhor the lighter arts of literature, and, perhaps, condemn those which are more serious, have, as might have been expected, met much rough usage at the hands of novelists and dramatic authors, who generally represent them either as idiots or hypocrites. A very different feeling is due to many, perhaps to most of this enthusiastic sect, nor is it rashly to be inferred, that he who makes religion the general object of his life, is for that sole reason to be held either a fool or an impostor. The professions of strict piety are inconsistent with open vice, and, therefore, must, in the general case, lead men to avoid the secret practice of what, openly known, must be attended with loss of character ; and thus the Methodists, and other rigid sectaries, oppose at least the strong barriers of interest and habitual restraint, to the temptations which beset them, in addition to those restrictions which religion and morality impose on all men. It is also a species of

religion peculiarly calculated, as affecting the feelings, to operate upon the millions of ignorant poor, whose understandings the most learned divines would in vain address by mere force of argument; and, doubtless, many such simple enthusiasts as Ezekiel Daw, by their well-meant and indefatigable exertions amongst the stubborn and ignorant, have been the instruments of Providence to call such men from a state of degrading and brutal profligacy, to a life more worthy of rational beings, and of the name of Christians. Thus thinking, we are of opinion, that the character of Ezekiel Daw, which shows the Methodist preacher in his strength and in his weakness, bold and fervent when in discharge of his mission, simple, well meaning, and even absurd, in the ordinary affairs of life, is not only an exquisite, but a just portrait.

\* Cumberland seems to have been less happy in some of the incidents of low life which he has introduced. He forced, as we have some reason to suspect, his own elegance of ideas, into an imitation of Fielding's scenes of this nature; and, as bashful men sometimes become impudent in trying to be easy, our ingenious author has occasionally, in his descriptions of Zachary Cawdle and his spouse, become disgusting, when he meant to be humorous.

Cumberland piqued himself particularly on the conduct of the story, but we confess ourselves unable to discover much sufficient reason. His

stein is neither more artfully perplexed, nor more happily disentangled, than in many tales of the same kind; there is the usual, perhaps we should call it the necessary, degree of improbability, for which the reader must make the usual and necessary allowance, and little can be said in this respect, either to praise or censure the author. But there is one series of incidents, connected with a train of sentiment, rather peculiar to Cumberland, which may be traced through several of his dramas, and which appears in *Arundel*, and makes a principal part of the interest in *Henry*. He had a peculiar taste in love affairs, which induced him to reverse the usual and natural practice of courtship, and to throw upon the softer sex the task of wooing, which is more gracefully, as well as naturally, the province of the man. In *Henry* he has carried this farther, and endowed his hero with all the self-denial of the Hebrew patriarch, while he has placed him within the influence of a seductive being much more fascinating in her address than the frail Egyptian matron. In this point, Cumberland either did not copy his master, Fielding, at all, or, what cannot be conceived of an author so acute, he mistook for serious that author's ironical account of the continence of Joseph Andrews. We do not desire to bestow many words on this topic, but we are afraid, such is the universal inaccuracy of moral feeling in this age, that a more judicious author



would not have striven against the stream, by holding up his hero as an example of what is likely to create more ridicule than imitation.

It might be also justly urged against the author, that the situations in which Henry is placed with Susan May exceed the decent license permitted to modern writers; and certainly they do so. But Cumberland himself entertained a different opinion, and concludes with this apology:—"If, in my zeal to exhibit virtue triumphant over the most tempting allurements, I have painted those allurements in too vivid colours, I am sorry, and ask pardon of all those who think the moral did not heal the mischief."

Another peculiarity of our author's plots, is, that an affair of honour, a duel either designed or actually fought, forms an ordinary part of them. This may be expected in fictitious history, as a frequent incident, since the remains of the gothic customs survive in that particular only, and since the indulgence which it affords to the angry passions affords an opportunity, valuable to the novelist, of stepping beyond the limits prescribed by the ordinary rules of society, and introducing scenes of violence, without incurring the charge of improbability. But Cumberland himself had something of a chivalrous disposition. His mind was nurtured in sentiments of honour, and in the necessity of maintaining reputation with the hazard of life; in which he

resembled another dramatic poet, the celebrated author of *Douglas*, who was also an enthusiast on the point of honour. In private life, Cumberland had proved his courage; and, in his Memoirs, he mentions, with some complacency, his having extorted from a "rough and boisterous captain of the sea" an apology for some expressions reflecting on his friend and patron, Lord Sackville. In his Memoirs, he dwells with pleasure on the attachment shown to him by two companies of volunteers, raised in the town of Tunbridge, and attaches considerable importance to the commission of commandant, with which their choice had invested him. They presented their commander with a sword, and, when their pay was withdrawn, offered to continue their service, gratuitously, under him.

The long and active literary life of this amiable man and ingenious author, was concluded on the 7th of May, 1811, in his 80th year, at the house of Mr. Henry Fry, in Bedford-place, Russel-square, and he was interred in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey.

His literary executors were Mr. Richard Sharpe, already mentioned, Mr. Rogers, the distinguished author of *The Pleasures of Memory*, and Sir James Bland Burgess; but we have seen none of his posthumous works, except *Retrospection*, a poem in blank verse, which appeared in 1812, and which appears to have been wrought up out of the ideas

which had suggested themselves, while he was engaged in writing his Memoirs.

Mr. Cumberland had the misfortune to outlive his lady and several of his family. His surviving offspring were Charles, who, we believe, held high rank in the army, and William, a post captain in the navy. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Lord Edward Bentinck, son of the Duke of Portland; his second, Sophia, was less happily wedded to William Badcock, Esq. who died in the prime of life, and left a family of four ~~grand~~ children, whom chancery awarded to the care of Mr. Cumberland. His third surviving daughter was Frances Marianne, born during his unlucky embassy to Spain. To her the author affectionately inscribed his Memoirs, as having found, in her filial affection, all the comforts that the best of friends could give, and derived, from her talents and understanding, all the enjoyments that the most pleasing of companions could communicate.

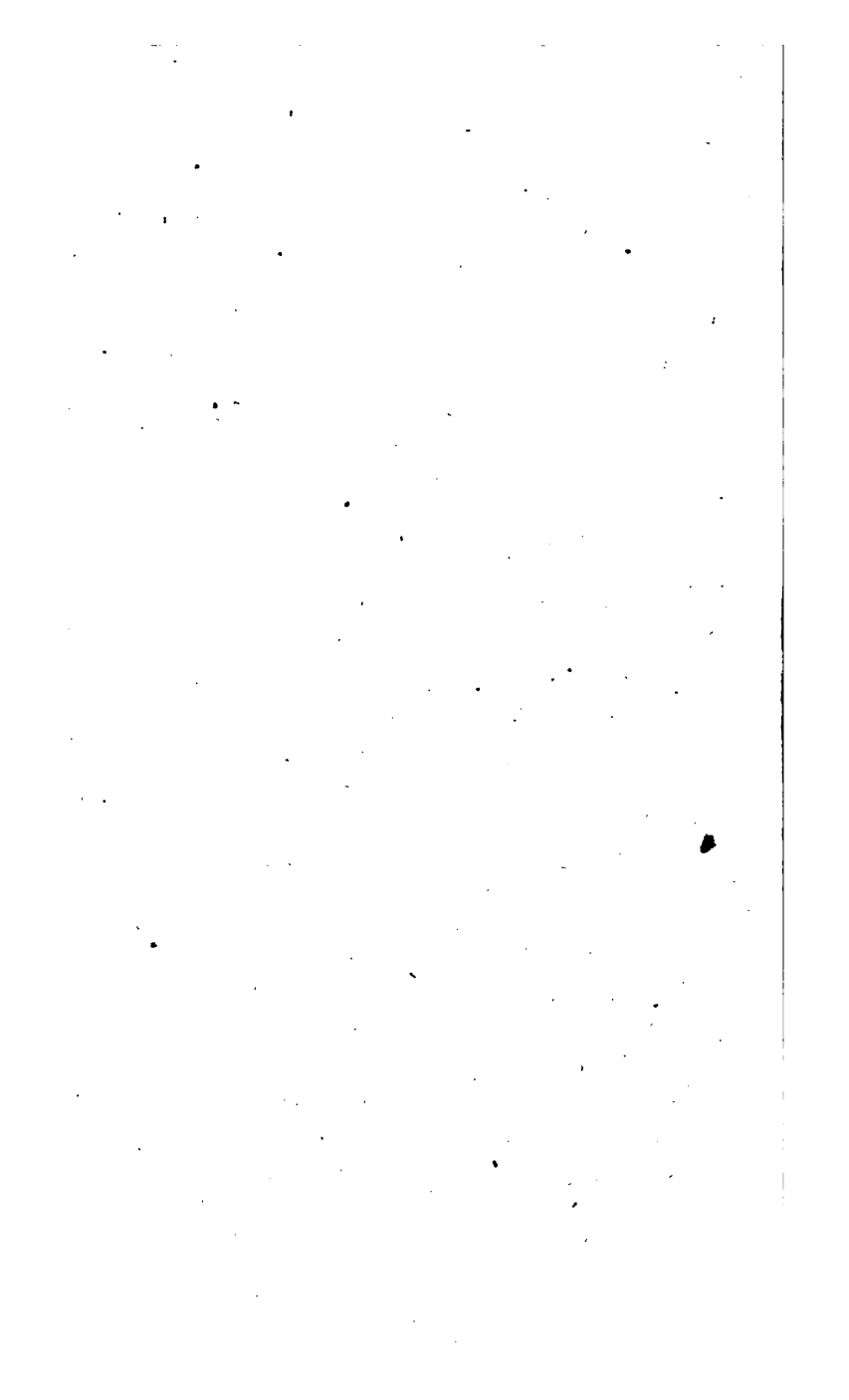
In youth, Mr. Cumberland must have been handsome; in age, he possessed a pleasing external appearance, and the polite ease of a gentleman, accustomed to the best company. In society, he was eloquent, well-informed, and full of anecdote; a willing dealer in the commerce of praise, or—for he took no great pains to ascertain its sincerity—we should rather say, of flattery. His conversation often showed the author in his strong and in his

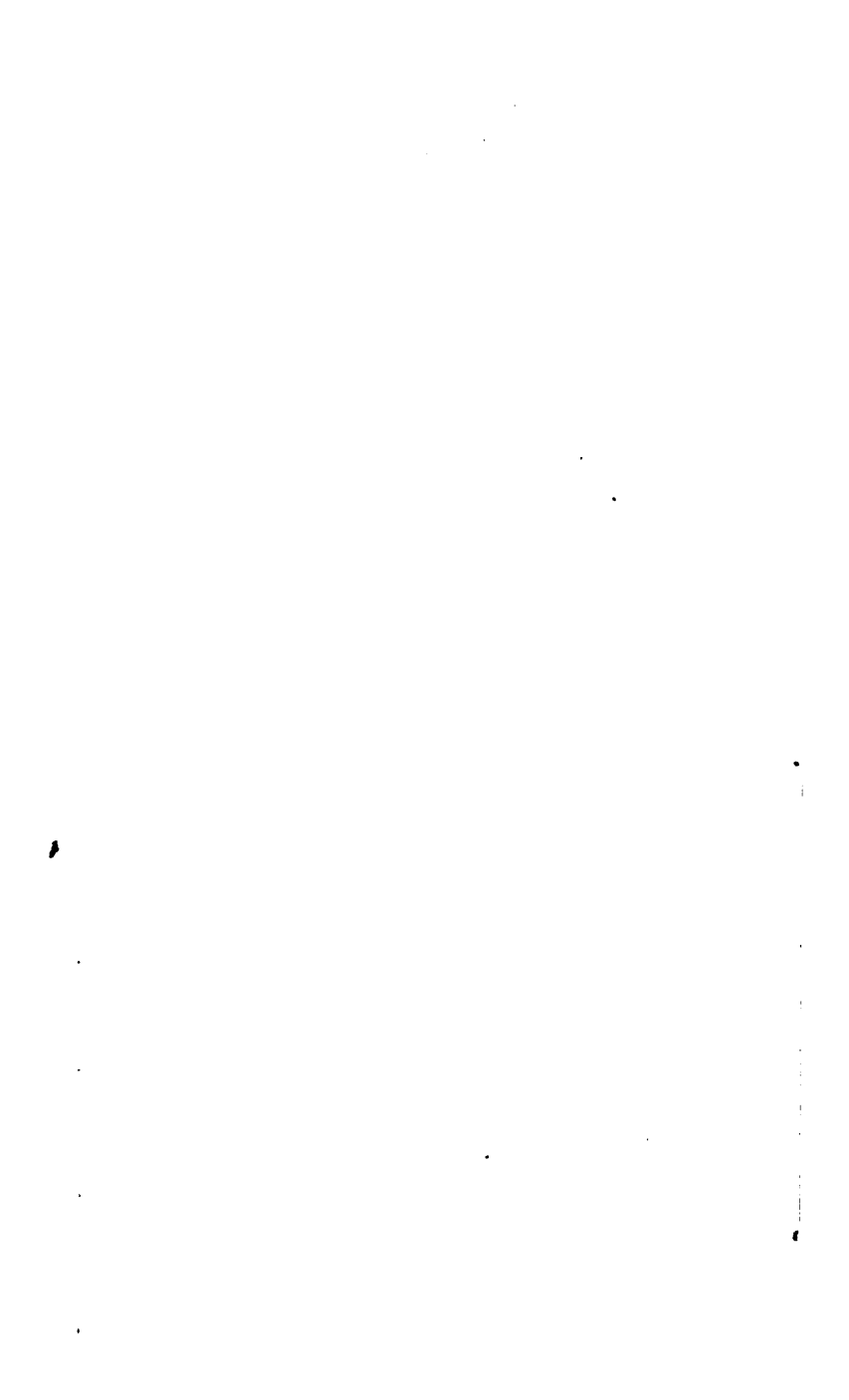
weak points. The foibles are well known which Sheridan embodied on the stage, in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary. But it is not from a caricature that a just picture can be drawn, and in the little pettish sub-acidity of temper which Cumberland sometimes exhibited, there was more of humorous sadness, than of ill-will, either to his critics or his contemporaries. He certainly, like most poets, was little disposed to yield to the assaults of the former, and often, like a gallant commander, drew all his forces together to defend the point which was least tenable. Neither can it be denied, that while he was stoutly combating for the cause of legitimate comedy and the regular novel, he manifested something of personal feeling in his zeal against those contemporaries who had found new roads, or by-paths, as he thought them, to fame and popularity, and forestalled such as were scrupulously treading the beaten highway, without turning to the right or to the left. These imperfections, arising, perhaps, from natural temper, from a sense of unmerited neglect, or from the keen spirit of rivalry proper to men of an ardent disposition, rendered irritable by the eagerness of a contest for public applause, are the foibles rather of the profession than the individual: and though the man of letters might have been more happy, had he been able entirely to subdue them, they detract nothing

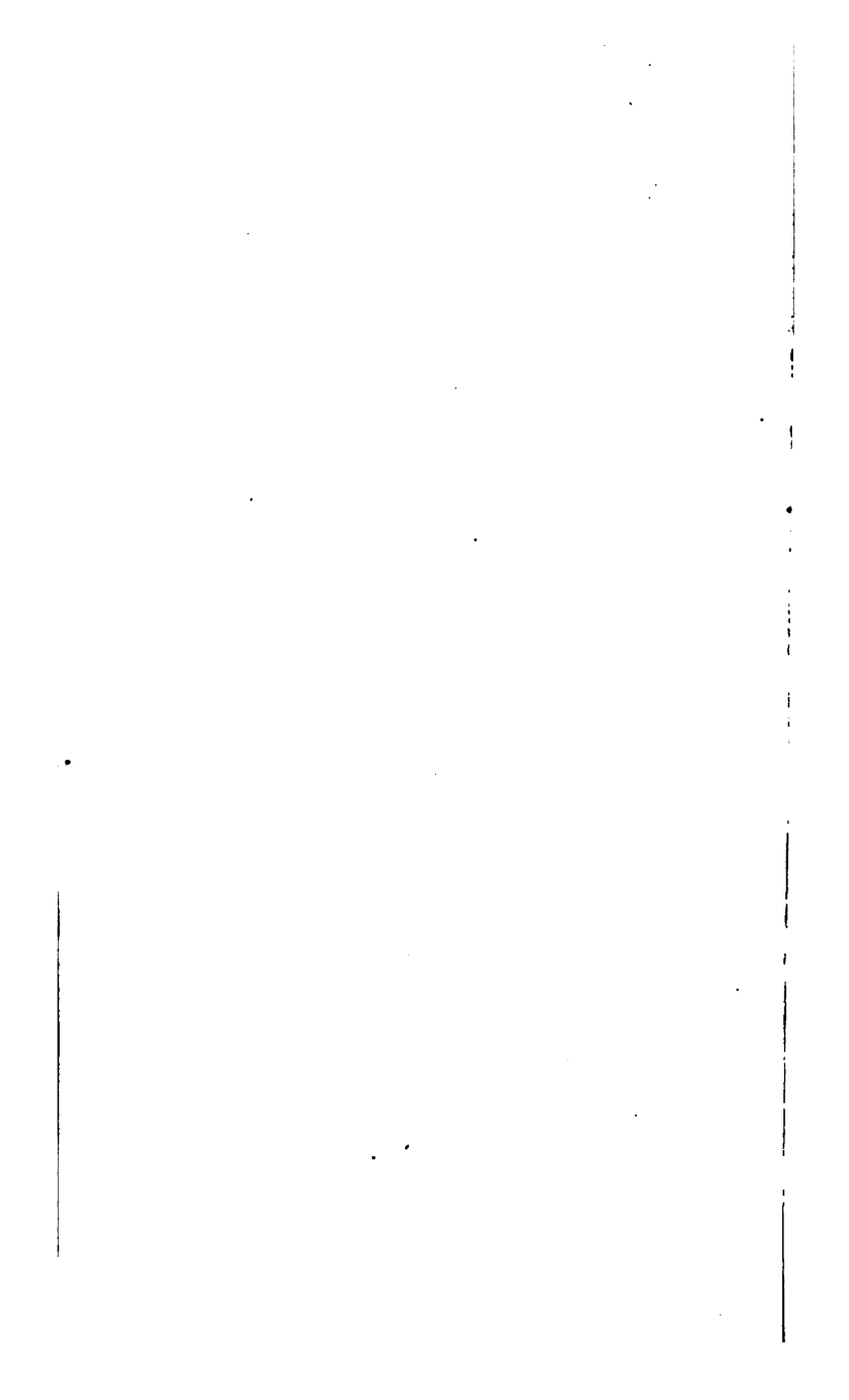
from the character of the man of worth, the scholar, and the gentleman.

We believe Cumberland's character to have been justly, as well as affectionately, summed up in the sermon preached on occasion of his funeral, by his venerable friend, Dr. Vincent, then Dean of Westminster. "The person you now see deposited is Richard Cumberland, an author of no small merit; his writings were chiefly for the stage, but of strict moral tendency—they were not without their faults; but these were not of a gross description. He wrote as much as any, and few wrote better; and his works will be held in the highest estimation, so long as the English language is understood. He considered the theatre as a school for moral improvement, and his remains are truly worthy of mingling with the illustrious dead which surround us. In his subjects on divinity, you find the true Christian spirit; and may God, in his mercy, assign him the true Christian reward!"

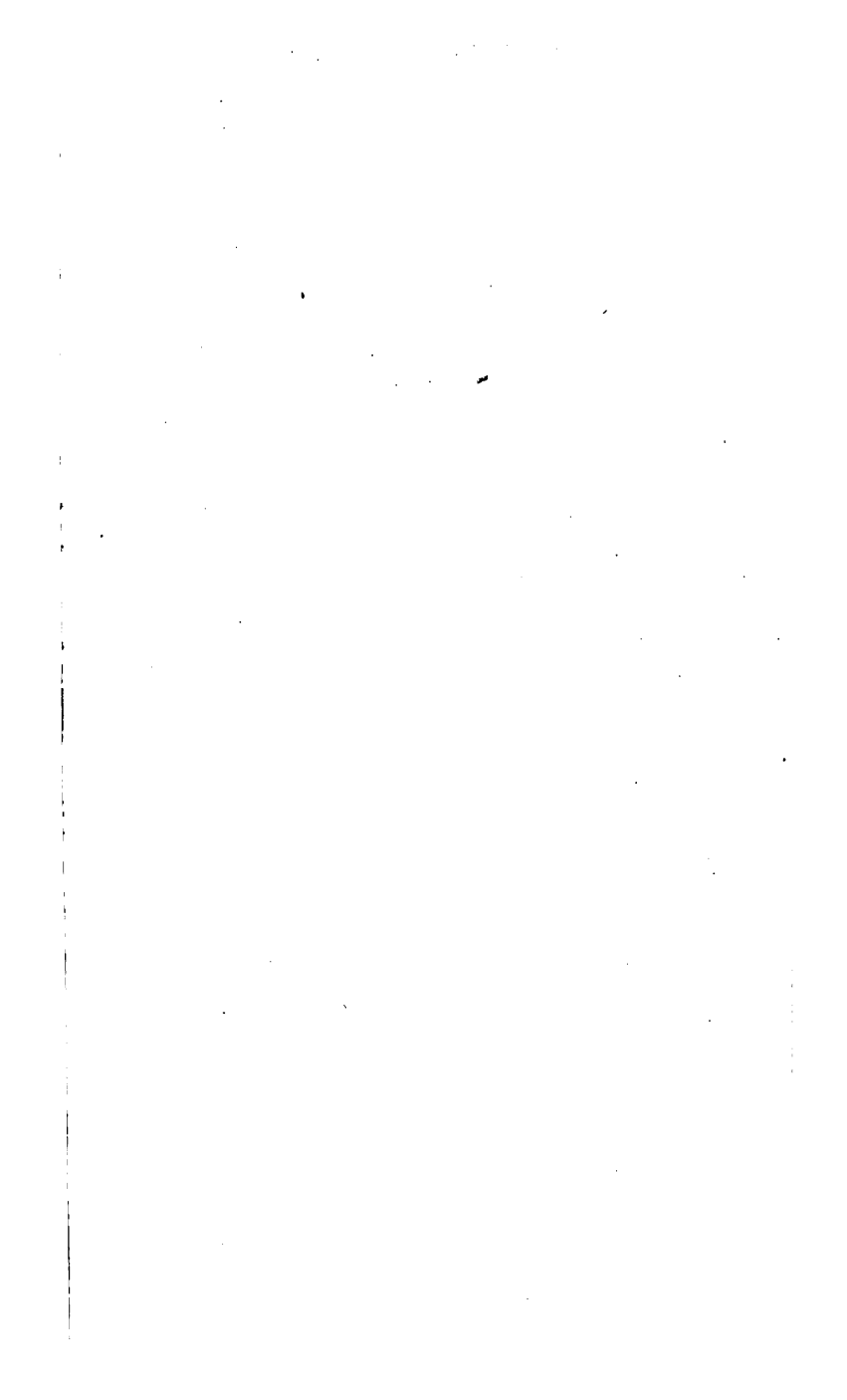
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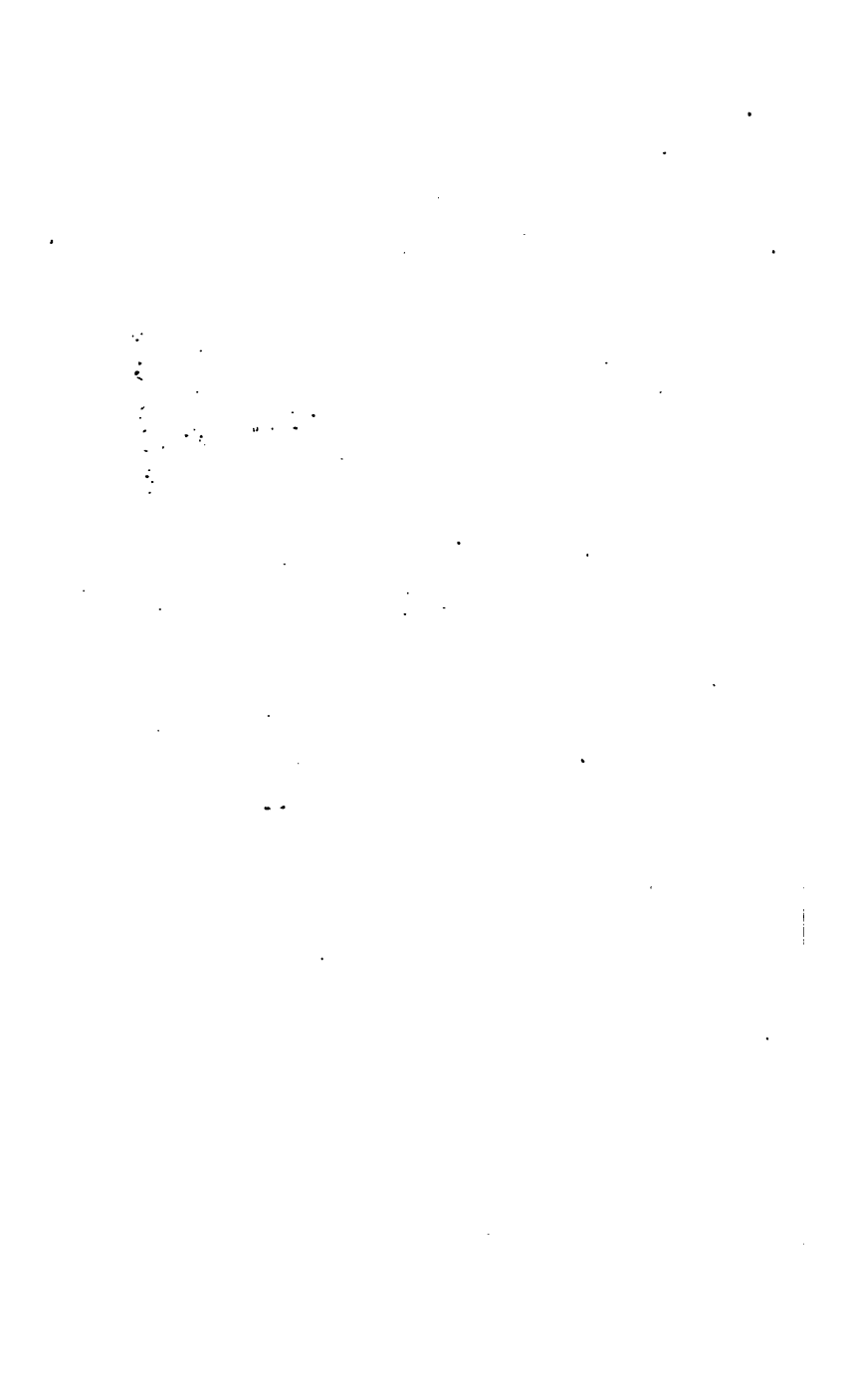












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